

PRESS RELEASE



SPIRITSEUROPE: LUXEMBOURG'S NEW ALCOHOL PROPOSALS ARE MISGUIDED

Brussels, 10 March 2020 - TODAY, spiritsEUROPE has written to the Luxembourg Ministry for Health and Economic Affairs to caution against prospective plans to raise the legal purchasing age for spirits, but not for beer or wine.

Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE warned that such a move would mislead consumers to believe that beer or wine are in some way different from spirits:

“Raising the legal purchasing age for spirits risks sending a message to young people that they can drink beer and wine with less risk. It is not true and it is dangerous. All alcohol should be enjoyed in moderation, by those who are of age, and we must ensure that we do not mislead consumers to believe that any alcohol is healthier than another, or acceptable for those underage.”

The WHO notes that 80% of alcohol consumed in Luxembourg is either beer or wine and that only 20% is in the form of spirits¹. Additionally, a report commissioned by the European Commission shows that 66% of alcohol consumed by young people across the EU is from categories other than spirits². The same report, the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs, also shows that beer is the most popular category of alcohol for young people, not spirits.

“Any measure targeting spirits alone would ignore two thirds of alcohol consumption by young people which demonstrates why this proposal is misguided” continued Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE.

The spirits sector invests in educational initiatives to reduce underage drinking and in January of this year, along with the beer and wine sectors as part of the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking, committed to introduce clear age-restriction labels on all drinks³. A recent report from IARD showed that binge drinking amongst those aged 15-19 fell by 28% between 2010 and 2016 showing the great progress that has been made in Europe⁴.

“Europeans are drinking more and more responsibly and proposals such as this could work against this trend by sending a message to those underage that it’s acceptable to drink alcohol, when it is not. We hope that the government will reconsider this proposal and we are ready to work with them to tackle harmful drinking in a sensible way” concluded Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE.

- ENDS -

¹ https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/profiles/lux.pdf?ua=1

² http://www.espad.org/sites/espad.org/files/ESPAD_report_2015.pdf

³ <https://iard.org/press/28%20January%202020>

⁴ <https://iard.org/getattachment/ac5eaa00-c6fa-4fb1-b285-832358db2794/trends-report-heavy-episodic-drinking-2019.pdf>



NOTES TO EDITORS

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- **spiritsEUROPE** proudly represents one of Europe's most valuable agri-food export sectors and, with it, the interests of 31 associations of spirits producers as well as 9 leading multinational companies. More information can be found here: <https://spirits.eu/>
- The government of Luxembourg as part of its *Plan d'Action Luxembourgeois de réduction du Mésusage de l'Alcool* has included a proposal to raise the legal drinking age for spirit drinks, while maintaining the LDA of 16 for beers and wines. More information can be found here: <https://sante.public.lu/fr/publications/p/plan-national-alcool-2020-2024/plan-national-alcool-palma-2020-2024.pdf>
- WHO Luxembourg Fact sheet can be found here: https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/profiles/lux.pdf?ua=1
- The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs is available here: http://www.espad.org/sites/espad.org/files/ESPAD_report_2015.pdf
- The International Alliance for Responsible Drinking (IARD) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to reducing harmful drinking and promoting understanding of responsible drinking. More information can be found here: <https://iard.org/>
- IARD recently announced a series of actions to accelerate reductions in underage drinking including the introduction of age-restriction symbols or equivalent on all products. More information can be found here: <https://cms.iard.org/getmedia/49b6f5c7-8654-4800-bf0a-0da33f18bbb6/Actions-to-accelerate-reductions-in-underage-drinking.pdf>
- IARD's report detailing heavy episodic drinking trends can be found here: <https://iard.org/getattachment/ac5eaa00-c6fa-4fb1-b285-832358db2794/trends-report-heavy-episodic-drinking-2019.pdf>