

PRESS RELEASE



spiritsEUROPE welcomes decline in alcohol consumption among youth in Europe

31 March 2021 - Today, spiritsEUROPE publishes a summary of the key findings from the latest European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). The results show a broadly positive trend, with underage drinking declining by 22% among 15- to 16-year-olds.

The latest ESPAD report presents trend data that shows a significant decrease in alcohol consumption among school students in the EU, with levels far lower than in 2003, when alcohol consumption among this age group peaked. The report is based on an anonymous survey that is regularly conducted among 100,000 students in 35 European countries.

In the EU (and Norway), overall alcohol consumption fell by 22% and declined in nearly all Member States. Heavy episodic drinking fell by 19%, and 86% of the respondents reported never being drunk in the past month. There were some notable differences between countries, and localised interventions adapted to the respective social and cultural contexts should be adopted to advance these positive trends.

Welcoming these findings, Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE, said:

“The latest ESPAD report data is confirming the positive trends we have been seeing and working towards throughout recent years. We were pleased to see that alcohol consumption among school students was the lowest since it peaked in 2003. Also, 86% of the respondents said they had not been drunk in the past month – this is a significant achievement which we want and need to build on further. No level of underage drinking is acceptable and we will remain committed to doing all we can to eradicate it.

The ESPAD survey is extremely comprehensive but concluded before the onset of the COVID pandemic. However, we are reassured that these positive trends continued throughout 2020. They show that we are moving in the right direction. The spirits sector is proud of the commitment and contribution we are making in partnership with public and private stakeholders through our responsible drinking campaigns. We will continue to invest in this area to help accelerate further progress,” Ulrich Adam added.

To read our summary of the ESPAD report, please click [here](#).

NOTES TO EDITORS

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- spiritsEUROPE proudly represents the EU spirits sector, one of Europe's most valuable agri-food export sectors and, with it, the interests of 29 associations of spirits producers as well as 10 leading multinational companies. More information can be found here: <https://spirits.eu/>
- ESPAD is a collaborative effort of independent research teams in more than 40 European countries and the largest cross-national research project on adolescent substance use in the world. Almost 100 000 students participated in the latest survey round, responding to an anonymous questionnaire. The ESPAD Report 2019 can be found here: <http://espad.org/espad-report-2019>
- New figures from the Trimbos institute showed that 49% of people between 16-35 cut down on their drinking during the first lockdown compared to the same period in 2019. <https://www.trimbos.nl/docs/423b9c4b-a389-4bfd-aa33-0c914438f1f9.pdf>
- Data from IWSR Drinks Market Analysis showed significant declines in alcohol consumption during the pandemic in most markets including across Europe. <https://www.theiwsr.com/beverage-alcohol-in-2020-performs-better-than-expected/>
- Confronting underage drinking calls for teamwork among those who influence and shape minors' attitudes, such as peers, parents or educators on why not to drink. This goes hand-in-hand with limiting the availability of products by providing training for staff selling and serving our products to ensure compliance of legal purchase age laws. See example of actions across Europe under www.drinksinitiaves.eu