Alcohol, Harm and Young Europeans
- a fact compilation
Alcohol use has significant adverse effects on the physical, psychological and social health of individuals, families and communities throughout Europe. The direct and indirect effects are diffuse and costly; they are not confined to a minority of easily identified heavier drinkers, but extend across the whole population.

- **23 Million** adults are alcohol addicted in the EU
- **195 000 people** in the EU die every year because of alcohol use
- **2/3** of all the reported victims of domestic violence had been attacked by a person who had used alcohol
- The tangible cost of crime associated with alcohol in the EU is **€33 Billion**.
- More than **60%** of all violent acts are connected to alcohol use
- Alcohol is the **second largest risk factor** for disease burden in Europe. It is the cause of more than 60 diseases and illnesses.
- Every year the costs of direct social harm of alcohol are **€125 Billion**
- Alcohol is socially the **most harmful drug**
- The intangible social costs of alcohol, which describe the value people put on suffering and lost life, in the EU alone are estimated to be **€270 Billion**.
- **9 million children** and young people in the EU are growing up with one or both parents addicted to alcohol
- Under-age alcohol use is more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined
- 16% of cases of child abuse and neglect involve alcohol
- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy is the leading known cause of birth defects and developmental disorders in the EU. It affects about 1% of people in the EU (i.e. nearly 5 million people)
- 43% of 15-16 year-old students in Europe report heavy episodic drinking during the past 30 days
- Ca. 15% of 15-16 year-old students report serious problems during the past 12 months due to alcohol use (with parents, performance at school, physical fights)
- Almost 90% of 15-16 year-old students have used alcohol at least once during their lifetime and 61% had used alcohol in the past 30 days
- Early alcohol use has long-lasting consequences. People who begin using alcohol before the age of 15 are 4 times more likely to develop alcohol addiction at some point in their lives compared to those who use alcohol for the first time at the age of 20 or older
- Under-age alcohol use is associated with academic failure, illicit drug use, tobacco use and a range of harmful physical effects from hangovers to poisoning
There is a relationship between alcohol use and mental health problems.
Alcohol related injuries and accidents are the **leading cause of death** among young people.
5% of 15-16 year old report regretted sex.
In 2000 for instance alcohol was the **number one killer of young men** in Europe.
Much of alcohol harm happens when they are in or on the way home from drinking environments.
One in five European night life users had been involved in violence in the last 12 months.
Over one fifth of the European population aged 15 years and above reporting heavy episodic drinking (five or more drinks on an occasion, or 50g alcohol) at least once a week. Not only among young people or those from northern Europe.
In Germany for instance between 2000 and 2008 the number of alcohol intoxicated youngsters ending up in emergency rooms increased by 170%.
Alcohol intoxication predicts school dropout.
50% of all teen automobile crashes can be linked to alcohol.
Europeans' attitudes towards alcohol policies

- 95% of Europeans consider alcohol to be a key factor behind violence against women and children
- 89% of Europeans think that selling and serving alcohol to young people under the age of 18 should be banned
- 77% of Europeans support a ban of alcohol advertising targeting young people

Prevention

- Two-thirds of European countries had a minimum age limit of 18 years and one-fifth had a minimum age limit of 16 years for on-premise sales of beer and wine. Three countries have no age limit for the on-premise sales of alcohol at all.
- Despite industry claims to the contrary, young people who are exposed to alcohol marketing start using alcohol earlier and use more alcohol if they are already users. Efforts to reduce youth exposure to alcohol ads enjoy strong public support.
- When outlet density increases, alcohol use increases and vice versa. Alcohol outlet density is the single greatest predictor of violent crime in neighborhoods, greater than other social and economic factors.
- The price mechanism is very effective in preventing alcohol use among young people. The higher the price of an alcoholic beverage, the lower its usage.
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