



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### TAKE CARE Newsletter 6

April 2012

<b>Reports from the Project Coordination</b>	<b>2</b>
■ Exchange of Experiences during the Period of Implementation	
■ What actually is “risky consumption by adolescents”?	
<b>Reports from the European Countries</b>	<b>5</b>
■ RPHI Maribor (Slovenia)	
■ CAD Limburg (Belgium)	
■ OKANA/HIPPOCRATES Kos (Greece)	
■ Diakonie Herford (Germany)	
■ KENTHEA Paphos (Cyprus)	
■ Youth Office South Tyrol/Kassianeum (Italy)	
■ HSE Navan (Ireland)	
■ Prevensia V&P Bratislava (Slovakia)	
<b>TAKE CARE Partners introducing themselves</b>	<b>17</b>
■ Youth Office Bozen (Italy)	
<b>Further Topics</b>	<b>20</b>
■ Research: Why do retailers (not) comply with the legislation on sales of alcohol?	
■ 1st International Conference on Family-Based Prevention and Positive Parenting	
■ “Problematic Alcohol Consumption by Adolescents in the Public Space”	

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## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### Reports from the Project Coordination

#### Exchange of Experiences during the Period of Implementation: Coaching Visits at TAKE CARE Partner Organisation and Workshop III in Cyprus

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Coaching visitations at all partner organisations are part of the concept, during the practical implementation of the four TAKE CARE interventions. The purpose of these visitations is to deal with the situation of a partner in a concentrated way, without the hustle and bustle of the meetings at workshops. It is important for the project management to understand the implementation of TAKE CARE in the light of the structural setting (construction and infrastructure of the help system, existing cooperation, social and political background, and so on). Only with this basic understanding it is possible to find out about key factors for the success in implementing the multilevel approach, but also about risk factors.

So far there have been visitations of nine out of ten partners; all of them have been successful. Many tips have been picked up, which – carried on – have been useful to other partners.

This has been a way to overcome certain obstacles that appeared during implementation.

These visitations made it obvious that a harmonised network of step-by-step preventions is very diverse in the participating countries. For instance, in some countries the materials for retailers of alcohol, as drafted by CAD Limburg, have been the first, which could be used for this target group.

TAKE CARE is a behavioural oriented prevention strategy. A comparison of regional condition shows that the more it is supported by structural measures, the more successful it can be put into practice. If on the one hand, people are less aware about the risks of alcohol consumption and, on the other hand, rules regarding the youth protection exist only on paper and are not enforced, retailers can hardly be motivated to participate in training. Their attitude is: “Why shouldn't I sell alcohol to a 15-year-old? The neighbouring store will do it.”



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

The visitations took place between October 2011 and March 2012. In February, there has been a meeting with all partners in Paphos / Cyprus. In addition to the coaching visitations, this meeting helped to exchange successful experiences of implementation as well as to overcome potential difficulties.

The host KENTHEA and His Eminence Metropolitan of Tamasos, Mr. Isaiah, welcomed the TAKE CARE partners.



His Eminence Metropolitan of Tamasos Mr. Isaiah & TAKE CARE team

Nadja Wirth

[Table of contents ▶](#)

### What actually is “risky consumption by adolescents”?

One target group of TAKE CARE – in addition to parents, key persons and employees in retail – are “adolescents between 12 and 21 years, who have been noticed for a risky consumption of alcohol.”

Each expert will have certain adolescents in mind, which will fall under this category. Still, the period of implementation showed that the interpretation of when to consider alcohol consumption risky may differ significantly. Certainly, this depends on quite a number of factors, for example

- ▶ the legal frame-work in the respective country
- ▶ the personal socialisation and attitude towards alcohol



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

- ▶ the professional standards in the respective country or institution
- ▶ the public discussion
- ▶ the cultural roots of alcohol

(Inter-)nationally accepted standards about when to consider a consumption pattern as risky for the physical and psychological help, have been only defined for adults so far.<sup>1</sup> Analogue definitions for minors only exist – based on the current research – in Belgium.<sup>2</sup>

The topic of defining the risky alcohol consumption of adolescents has been with the project partners for quite a while already – not with the goal of developing a scientifically sound message for Europe though; this seems impossible. It is more about finding the most suited target group of adolescents for the ro.pe-training<sup>®</sup>, as a second step, after some reflections and comparisons on different definitions: Does the training aim at adolescents consuming “risky” or “extremely risky”? Or should the risky consumption go along with other psycho-sociological noticeable problems?

Consequently, this newsletter is, as a first step, dedicated to a comparison of the definitions. Please, learn about the opinions of the TAKE CARE partner organisations regarding the risky consumption by adolescents on the following pages ...

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[Table of contents ▶](#)

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<sup>1</sup> **Internationally** there is a definition by the WHO regarding alcohol consumption without risk from 2010: More intense diagnostics and interventions are recommended, if ...

- there has been an occasion with a consumption of more than five standard beverages (60 g pure alcohol) in the past 12 months
- in average more than 2 standard beverages (= 16-24 g pure alcohol) are consumed
- there is a daily consumption (mhGAP Intervention Guide, p. 60)

**In Germany, among others**, there are gender-specific cut off limits for consumption with little risk. The scientific council of the German Centre for Addiction Issues (DHS) defined these limits for healthy adults in 2008: max. 24 g (men) or. 12 g (women) of pure alcohol per day and an abstinence of two days every week. Man not more than five glasses, women not more than four glasses at each opportunity (Orth B, Töppich J.: Rauschtrinken und durchschnittlicher Alkoholkonsum bei Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen in Deutschland. Suchttherapie 2012; 13: 6–14)

<sup>2</sup> Edited by the Vereniging voor Alcohol- en andere Drugproblemen vzw (VAD) – further information may be obtained at the WEG Redaktion



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### Reports from the European Countries

#### RPHI Maribor (Slovenia)

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We have not held discussions on this issue in Slovenia, about what risky consumption means among adolescents. On this issue any parent, the advisory council worker, salesman define this straight at his own discretion.



It is forbidden in Slovenia to sell any alcohol drinks, which content (more than 1,2‰ per mil of alcohol) to the minors under the age of 18 (sellers may require identity document to check out the age) and to people, for whom it is justified to assume that they will turn alcohol over to the minors or who are showing signs of intoxication. The law forbids selling alcohol drinks between 21:00 and 7:00, except in pubs, bars and discotheques, where it is forbidden to sale the spirits till 10:00 in the morning. It is also forbidden to sell alcohol drinks in institutions and associated places, which implement education and health services and in sports facilities, when sport events take place.

Youngsters under the age of 16 are prohibited entry and presence in pubs, clubs and discotheques and on events, where alcohol drinks are sold, without the company of parents or foster parents, between 24:00 and 5:00 (personal document to check the age).

According to our experiences, the Slovenian legislation in the field of alcohol does not count for parents of adolescents and sellers of alcoholic beverages. At the same time, Slovenian society does not take problems in relation to alcohol seriously enough.

The tolerance for alcohol in the Slovenian society is very high, which means that society is very tolerant towards consumption of alcohol among adolescents too.

Thus, the society generally allows the access to alcohol for the minors, regardless of the law. The parents do not see the consumption of alcohol as a big problem for their children comparing with the use of illicit drugs. Parents often tolerate the consumption of alcohol, since they themselves have often experienced this when they were at this age.

Parents often associated consumption of alcohol among their children as part of growing up and a part of interaction with peers ("the more you can drink, the bigger shooter you are"). Parents do not have fear that their children will have the problem due to alcohol.

In Slovenia the expert discussions occur principally in the direction of alcoholism among adults, but when it comes to alcoholism among young people, the discussions occur in the direction on the possible reasons for the use of alcohol. Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts a campaign mainly warning the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol, because there are a lot of traffic accidents due to driving under the influence of alcohol in Slovenia. There are not so many preventive workshops and projects on this issue for young people.



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

Advisory workers and other significant adults who have contact with children and adolescents often don't detect problem in relation to the use of alcohol among young people and therefore fail to act. However, they also have quite a tolerant attitude towards alcohol use for young people and consider that it falls within the period of adolescence.

We have a few manuals with recommendations for safely drinking alcohol for adults, which focus on the effects and consequences of alcohol abuse. Some of the manuals also contain advices and steps of the parents in the case of risky consumption of alcohol among young people.

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[Table of contents ▶](#)

## CAD Limburg (Belgium)

The discussion about acceptable alcohol guidelines and the legal framework is very hot these days in Belgium. In 2010 the age legislation concerning the age limits for selling alcohol to youngsters was sharpened. It is forbidden to sell or pour alcohol under the age of 16 and sell or pour liquor under the age of 18. From health perspective, drinking alcohol at a young age is not recommended because of physical developments during adolescence. Nowadays there is a discussion about gas stations and certain shops where alcohol is available 24 hours a day.



When we look at how the legal framework is implemented, a lot of effort is put in informing all kinds of retailers about this legislation. We still encounter a lot of retailers that aren't aware of the legal framework. Next to that, there is a lack of control and monitoring by the local and federal governments in certain areas of the retailing business: festivals and parties by youth work are monitored strictly, night shops and kiosks hardly. Next to informing retailers, we also distribute materials they can use for implementing legislation; like wobblers, sorry-cards and brochures for kiosks and supermarkets and even beer mats, wristbands and posters for pubs, clubs and festivals.

Belgium is famous for its beer culture and abbey breweries. That means that alcohol takes a very central role in our culture of enjoying the great tastes of life. Most parents and key



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

persons have a very liberal idea about starting to drink alcohol and how much they drink. Although we have the impression that drinking in a sensible way is the main concern for parents and key persons.

There are some guidelines for drinking alcohol by young people. They are developed by the VAD (Flemish organisation for alcohol and drug problems). These guidelines state that: no alcohol under the age of 16 and no liquor under the age of 18. For boys between 16 and 18: maximum 2 units each time, not more than 2 days a week and this not every week. For girls: maximum 1-2 units each time, not more than 2 days a week and this not every week. These guidelines are only known by the health/ prevention sector. They are certainly not commonly known by the population. Youngsters experience these as unrealistic when confronted with them.

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[Table of contents ▶](#)

### OKANA/Hippocrates Kos (Greece)

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In Greece the last law reform concerning the protection of minors from smoking and alcohol was put into effect in 2008 and includes the following basic provisions:

- ▶ Consumption and sale of beer, wine, champagne, and all alcohol spirits is forbidden.
- ▶ Minors are allowed in public locations (restaurants, discotheques) only if accompanied by parents or another guardian.
- ▶ Private events are excluded



According to Greek Law, a person under 18 years of age is a minor and youths must prove identification of their age on request.

### Remarks

For bars and centres of amusement, it is compulsory to have a sign near the entrance stating that entrance is forbidden to people under the age of 18 that are not accompanied by parents or guardians.



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

For other public locations a sign is required which states that consumption of alcohol is forbidden to people under the age of 18 if not accompanied by a parent or guardian.

### Possible penalties in case of violations

- ▶ In case of violations there is a 1000 € to 20.000€ fine.
- ▶ In the case of continuous violation, license is provisionally recalled as well as the operation of enterprise, by decision of the responsible authorities.

It is worth noting that there are no measures regarding the consumption of alcohol in work environments or restrictions in the advertisement of alcoholic beverages on television and on the radio. Furthermore, though there are measures in Greece that concern the production quality control of alcoholic beverages, there are no substantial restrictions in their availability so as to limit the access. The legal limit of alcohol consumption in Greece, in order to safely and legally drive a car, is the same as adopted by many European countries, at 0.5 g/l, with very strict legal repercussions if above this limit.

Overall, the legal situation regarding alcohol use exists in three areas: in the production quality control, the prohibition of sale of alcoholic beverages to under age youths and the prohibition of driving under the influence of alcohol. What is required, however, is the substantial implementation of these laws through stricter control by the appropriate authorities.

What could aid the prevention policies in Greece achieve better results is more successful strategic planning, targeted educational programs for children and youths, informational projects for employers and staff regarding alcohol consumption in working environments and also counselling centres and services, particularly in the countryside and isolated areas.

The use of alcohol in our country is traditionally equivalent to many social events of our life such as festivals or dinner parties. This is mostly possible, because Greece is a country that produces wine and so the prices of alcoholic beverages are reasonable and also their availability is easy to people of any age. Figures from the 1st PanHellenic research concerning knowledge regarding alcohol, which took place in 2011, display that 800.000 Greek inhabitants consume alcohol on a daily basis. Furthermore, it was concluded that less than half of Greek inhabitants knew that alcohol was an addictive substance. Regarding alcohol consumption, 30,2 % reported that they did not know whether youths or pregnant women were allowed to consume alcohol, and 10% reported that they did not know that pregnant women were advised to not consume any amounts of alcohol.

Our traditional values that connect alcohol to social events and festivals, the acceptance shown from parents, the lack of the implementation of the legislation regarding the purchasing of alcohol drinks at supermarkets, the easy access to alcohol at cafes and bars (even though there is a legal forbiddance) explain the magnitude of alcohol consumption





## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

from youths in our country. For the teenager, alcohol works as a symbolic stage of getting older, becoming more independent and generally being able to enter a group of people.

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[Table of contents ▶](#)

### Diakonie Herford (Germany)



The Youth Protection Act, version dated 23rd July 2002 (BGBl I, 2730), latest alteration of 31st October 2008 (BGBl I, 2149), contains the following rules about consumption:

Who is legal to drink what kind of alcohol?

	Banned			Legal	
	Beer	Wine	Champagne	Alcopops	Hard Liquors
Under 14 years					
14 and 15 years	1)	1)	1)		
16 and 17 years					
18 to 212) years					

1) exceptionally, if older than 14 and if parents (legal guardian) are present

2) The justification for this limitation is the lack of experience (**prohibition of alcohol for novice drivers**). Because it also includes adults, it cannot be qualified as a youth protection rule only.

We, as prevention experts, welcome the special regulation in Germany (older than 14, if legal guardians are present), because it calls on parents, that they should go along with a responsible and indulgent handling of alcohol. The 0,00 gm. drink-drive limit for novice drivers is a sensible way of creating awareness and developing self-responsibility. Therefore, we consider the Youth Protection Act, if obeyed, sufficient. However, approached of structural prevention, such as a ban of glass bottles at major events, regulations on the sales of alcohol at certain hours or alcohol-free sports events are worth talking about.



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

Juvenile alcohol consumption is perceived critically by the society in respect to the drinking culture (pre-drinking), amount of alcohol and readiness for violence. Many different approaches for the reduction of these aspects have been initiated.

When talking to parents, there is a significant ambiguity in their attitude. Generally, parents think of the alcohol consumption critically. Yet, with regard to their own children they are not ready to set the desired limits, (tolerating educational mandate in discos). Because there is a focus on the drinking behaviour of adolescents, parents do not have to reflect upon their own alcohol consumption.

The scientific discussion is about the effectiveness of structural and/or behaviour-oriented prevention. Modern programmes are based on the life-skills approach. According to this approach, juvenile risky behaviour, like the consumption of alcohol, is seen as a behaviour, which has been learned in a society and is functional; it is a behaviour, which derives from an integration of influences from the social environment together with personal factors, such as cognition, attitudes and convictions. Binding limits exist for road traffic and workplaces.

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[Table of contents ▶](#)

### KENTHEA Paphos (Cyprus)

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The drinking patterns of the population in Cyprus have changed drastically in the last few decades. Particularly amongst youngsters attending school, there has been a significant increase in alcohol consumption in the last 5 years. Preliminary findings of ESPAD 2011 indicate that binge drinking has risen from 34% in 2007 to 44% 2011.



This is a matter that troubles both law enforcement and addiction prevention services alike. The legal situation in Cyprus as stands, states that, according to the law, receiving and/ or consuming alcoholic beverages under the age of seventeen, is prohibited.

Though the legal framework is very clear and meticulous, regarding the consumption of alcohol for people under the age of seventeen as to the penalties imposed should these laws be broken, the practical aspects and implementation of the laws are not. A big factor influencing this is the way the society of the country views the consumption of alcohol.



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

Though addiction is considered to be a situation where help must be sought after and provided, it seems that the consumption of alcohol in a “social” context is socially acceptable and maybe even encouraged. This seems to be the case not only among adults but also among adolescents. Drinking the “odd glass of beer” or having “a sip of the parent’s wine” at family gatherings and social events has penetrated into the lifestyle of Cypriot families. Youths are venturing out to bars and night clubs on the weekends and with their parents’ knowledge, are consuming alcohol, which is provided by the owners of the premises.

Furthermore, the drinking guidelines in Cyprus offer another topic for debate, being somewhat larger than in other European countries. The **blood alcohol content** (BAC) from a breath sample may not exceed the 22 µg per dL for a driver of a motor vehicle. Currently there is no distinction for drivers means of public transportation or dangerous loads, even though a change in the law is being discussed. This is also affected by the cultural viewpoint, and although alcoltests have become widely used by law enforcement services, driving whilst having consumed alcohol is not frowned upon.

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[Table of contents ▶](#)

### Youth Office South Tyrol/Kassianeum (Italy)

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The legal situation in Italy is as follows: Adolescents beyond 16 are legal to drink any kind of alcoholic beverages – regardless of the alcoholic strength. The retail or serving of alcohol is only legal at the age of 18. Based on the talks with retailers during the interventions in TAKE CARE, there is a significant uncertainty and ignorance about the legal age. Many took the view that hard liquors are only legal at the age of 18. This may be interpreted as an unuttered social will, or as an expression of a desire for more legal control or tougher consequences.

The position of educators and youth workers is complex and difficult: On the one hand, it is important to keep up the trust and relation, keep doors open and accept adolescents without moralising. On the other hand, this field of work is also about protecting the individual and also, especially in open youth work, the other and the group. Consequently, adolescents, who are troubles, with a strong consumption are (necessarily) excluded from these institutions. Those who require the intervention most, fall through this social system and are in danger to grow from a “normal risk”, which might even be positive for the



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

development to a certain extent – to a “dangerous” one. Meanwhile, there are some networks (very regional and selective), which are ready to deal with this situation.

The debate among the professional group of prevention experts is quite heated up and controversial. Supporters of a “tougher line” (teetotaling and repression) are facing supporters of a trustful line with consciousness and self-responsibility. The later ones argue for an encouragement of a collective growth in the sense of a sustainable culture of consumption or a drinking culture. This goal shall be achieved by an increase of responsibility, self-responsibility and self-esteem (risflecting).

Usually the adolescents are not involved in the design and draft of interventions; schools, with a few exceptions, suffer from an overload with bureaucratic and formal obligations. Therefore they invest too little energy in this area.

Generally speaking, parents, educators and teachers have a great need of support and projects, such as ro.pe-training in TAKE CARE. In the course of the talks during TAKE CARE, it became obvious that parents favour tightening of law or a higher legal age. Yet, many parents do not understand the use of that kind of projects for the development of their children and fear – in spite of detailed explanations on ro.pe and TAKE CARE – a social stigmatisation. This problem-centred perspective has also been confirmed to us by participants.

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[Table of contents ▶](#)

## HSE Dublin North East (Ireland)



Alcohol use and binge drinking among Irish youth is a major public health problem, they report being drunk more often than those in most other countries. (26% in the past month compared to a European average of 18%) Over half (54%) reported being drunk at least once by the age of 16. Binge drinking is considered to be 'the norm' among them.

In Ireland, the sale of alcohol is regulated and controlled by grant and renewal of licenses. It is a complex procedure governed by numerous Acts, statutory instruments and court rules, covering the period 1883 to 2008. The legislation regarding young people, alcohol and the conduct on licensed premises are as follows;



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

It is an offence for young people under the age of 18 years to:

- ▶ Purchase alcohol
- ▶ Consume alcohol in any place other than a private residence in which (s) he is present either by right or by permission
- ▶ To represent him/her to be over 18 years for the purpose of obtaining or being permitted to consume alcohol. Also any person between the ages of 18-21years is obliged to show evidence of this, to gain entry into any licensed premises and to purchase alcohol.

Young people under the age of 18 years are not allowed into licensed premises unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. They are also only allowed during extended hours to attend a private function at which food is served with the permission of their parent or guardian. It is also against the law for anyone to purchase and deliver alcohol to a private house for the consumption of people under the age of 18 years without the permission of a parent or guardian.

A more recent introduction to the law is the “Test purchasing of Intoxicating liquor. This scheme allows the gardaí to send teenagers of 15-17 years into licensed premises to buy alcohol. If a sale takes place, the licence holder of the premises will be prosecuted. Parental approval is required, and the young people will receive training. This was introduced to further protect minors from alcohol related harm. This scheme was signed into law on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2010.

Despite these laws, young people still have access to Alcohol. Of particular concern is the fact that 75% of Irish young people said they found it easy to obtain Alcohol (Espad 2007). One in five young people said they bought Alcohol from an off-licence for their last drinking occasion while one in eight said they bought alcohol at a pub or disco.

In Ireland, the drinks guidelines for over 18’s are as follows:

- ▶ Men: Maximum of 21 standard drinks / week (210g).
- ▶ Women: Maximum of 14 standard drinks / week (140g).

This equates to a daily low risk limit of 2 or 3 standards drinks for women, or 3 or 4 standard drinks for men, with some alcohol free days over the course of the week. It is advised that young people should delay drinking until the age of age of 18 years to avoid the health and social consequences.

Regardless of these guidelines, there is a cultural acceptability of drinking among both young and old people. Parental drinking habits and attitudes are one of the strongest influencing factors on young people’s drinking. Parents need to lead by example in relation to their own drinking and in facilitating young people to drink sensibly. However many parents are



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

“ambivalent” in their attitude to young people drinking, “They say: *‘Well at least they aren’t taking drugs’*”

Alcohol consumption among young people is of particular concern to everyone politically, personally and professionally. Some key recommendations of a recent report on the future direction of policy to deal with the use and misuse of alcohol are:

- ▶ Increase the price of alcohol so that it becomes less affordable;
- ▶ Introduce a legislative basis for minimum pricing, along with a ‘social responsibility’ levy on the drinks industry;
- ▶ commence Section 9 (structural separation of alcohol from other products in supermarkets, etc) of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008;
- ▶ Introduce legislation and statutory codes to provide for: a 9.00 p.m. watershed for alcohol advertising on television and radio; alcohol advertising in cinemas to only be associated with films classified as being suitable for over-18s; prohibition of all outdoor advertising of alcohol; and all alcohol advertising in the print media to be subject to stringent codes, enshrined in legislation and independently monitored;
- ▶ Phase out drinks industry sponsorship of sport and other large public events by 2016;
- ▶ Develop a system to monitor the enforcement of the provisions of the intoxicating liquor legislation;
- ▶ Establish a Clinical Directorate to develop the clinical and organisational governance framework to underpin treatment and rehabilitation services;
- ▶ Develop early intervention guidelines for alcohol and substance use across all relevant sectors of the health and social care system. This will include a national screening and brief intervention protocol for early identification of problem alcohol use.

It is expected that a population health approach will have a greater impact on alcohol use and misuse in the country.

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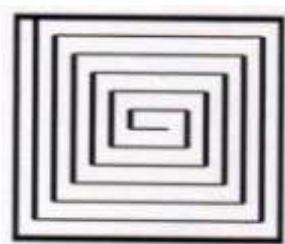
[Table of contents ▶](#)



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### Prevenca V&P Bratislava (Slovakia)

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According to Slovak Law (219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009): Protection from Misuse of Alcohol Beverages – Law 219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009: § 2 Minors till 15 years of age and underage till 18 years of age are not allowed to consume alcoholic beverages and other substances and are obliged to undergo orientation breath test or other orientation test control of other substances. Violations by minors (till 15 years of age) brings a fine of up to 33€ to legal guardian by municipality. Violations by underage (15 – 18 years of age) are reprimanded by municipality and in indicated cases forbidden to visit public locations with served alcohol. Violations by sellers can be punished with a fine from 160€ up to 6666€ acc. to § 12, the Protection from Misuse of Alcohol Beverages 219/1996 and Amending Act 214/2009.

Discussion on the issue of alcohol consumption mostly takes place within the scope of teaching in elementary and secondary schools. Discussion in the society is little and the primary prevention in the society is freezing and failing. Unfortunately, the maximal extent of this part of information is mostly provided by the tabloid press, which rather abuses such information with purpose to achieve its own higher rating.

The laws look good on paper but they are not very much implemented in practice, or only minimally. Alcohol is commonly sold to youths and children; nightclubs are full of minors who consume alcoholic beverages and no business has ever been closed for selling alcohol. During weekends and holidays, many children end up in hands of the anaesthesia-resuscitation and intensive care due to alcohol intoxication, and the number is growing. Their average age is lower and lower. Similarly, we can see that younger patients undergo the anti-alcoholic treatment; not even the 19-20-year-old adolescents with already developed alcohol dependence are an exception, which means that they started drinking more intensively already at the age of 12-13 years (as their testimonies confirm).

The first contact for young people with problems is school advisor who recommends other specialised services. The next contact is Centre of educational – psychological counselling and prevention (72 centres in each county around Slovakia), or centres near offices of social welfare. Most of the professionals working in such centres provide general counselling and therapy mostly according to social problems of youths. Alcohol problems are mostly hidden behind this problem.

Workplaces of specialised professionals follow the legislation strictly. Also parents show interest in specialised expert care for their children, but therapy, medical treatment, individual and family counselling are beyond the possibilities of these facilities. The problem also stems from cooperation with relatives, from inconsistent implementation of



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

recommendations, and from the lack of ability and patience to keep the advice and comply with the recommendations.

Society does not support consumption of alcohol in the public; it is rather an individual or economic matter. Problems arise from parents' attitudes, benevolence, underestimating, belittling, non-anticipation of conflict situations, and trivialisation of first signs in behaviour. With parents, this seems voluntary surrendering of parental educational rights and their own patterns. They solve the problem only in case it is serious. They want to solve the problem only with the child and not with the family itself.

The new legislation narrowed the possibilities of help very much - the lack of specialised counselling centres for individual age is apparent, as well as the lack of sanatoriums, hospitals, and possibilities of cooperation. Specialised professional care for the child age and adolescent age is only poorly covered. Recommendations on alcohol use are available for adults, they are called health - medical benefits, but the estimation of the consequences is very much obscured. Man alone don't consider drinking to be a problem except for the situation of a clear incentive on the part of legislation, family, or health conditions.

Experts often speak about alcohol among themselves, or at various professional events. When the extent and amount of alcohol is discussed, the quantity is not really relevant, but rather how alcohol is perceived. A really dangerous thing is how it is presented and how our society perceives it. Views and opinions on alcohol actually move in a "pro-drug" direction because alcohol is always associated with a pleasant feeling, fellowship, merriment, which its consumption brings about, and this is actually a way to experience / look for a drug effect, which is itself a dangerous thing. The problem resides not in the quantity, but rather in the motives why alcohol is so popular.

In Slovakia, the legal norms that govern the prohibition of alcohol use are formally sufficiently strict enough, which means that there might be a good basis to put young people aside from drinking. However, in practice these norms should be applied not only in the form of repression, but mainly as a basis for prevention, information, change of attitudes and values both for parents and then for children and youths.

We would like to thanks to Dr. Silvia Lúčna, Dr. Ida Smolinska, professionals providing psychiatric treatment for sharing their opinions and professionals experiences.

**Alena Kopányiová & Štefan Matula, Slovakia**

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[Table of contents ▶](#)





## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### TAKE CARE partners introduce themselves

#### Youth Office (Italy)

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The Youth Office is part of the state authorities of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol. It collaborates together with NGO Youth Work in establishing multiple youth structures. Subsidiarity and participation are important key values.

#### Tasks

- ▶ conceptual and financial support of childcare and youth work
- ▶ promotion of participation of children and young people, of youth information and counselling as well as of international youth work
- ▶ network operation, cultural youth programmes and intercultural youth work

Children and youth development programmes are the most successful and effective investment into the future of our society. Therefore, youth policies are transversal challenges, which require practical contents continuously. The goal is to enable children and young people to act autonomously and self-dependently, to exercise rights and to take over responsibility, to understand life as a chance to live according to your own ideas. Subsidiarity and solidarity are the leitmotifs of youth policies, which shall lead to an educational partnership between children and young people, families, and internal and external institutions of schools. Collaboration and dialogue are key values, focussing on the needs of children and young people, which should be taken seriously. What do young people need in order to create their future lives as self-dependent, solidary and democratic citizens in our country? Their participation in the cultural and social life, their freedom to design their living environment and their options to have an influence on social developments, should be improved.

The education of the young generation is one of the most important investments that a country can make, so that the younger ones can master future challenges in politics and society. Therefore, investments in culture and education are no luxury, that may be afforded (or not), but they are an indispensable investment into the future. Childcare and youth work is part of the many ways of education, which have become a tight network of infrastructures, groups and projects in South Tyrol. Thanks to a substantial and goal-oriented support by state and communities, this is based on sound concepts. Thanks also for the commitment of thousands of voluntary youth coaches, members of boards of more than 100 organisations and thanks to superb willingness of private and public agents to work together in partnership.

More information: “Freiräume für junge Menschen“ youth work in South Tyrol:

[www.provinz.bz.it/jugendarbeit](http://www.provinz.bz.it/jugendarbeit)



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### Examples for initiatives:

#### **Magazine “z.B. Beiträge zur Jugendarbeit in Südtirol und Tirol”**

The magazine “z. B. – Beiträge zur Jugendarbeit in Südtirol und Tirol” [i. e., Contributions Regarding Youth Work in South Tyrol and Tyrol], which is published six times a year, addresses volunteers and full-time workers in childcare and youth work. It contains contribution on youth education, reports on experiences, educational offers and so on. The main topics in the recent years have been: volunteer status, community work, information culture, gender – gender role models, past meets future, intercultural youth work, and (Sehn-)Sucht [i.e. desire, longing, addiction] “z. B.” is edited by the Youth Office, together with the Youth Department of the State of Tyrol (Austria). The magazine can be ordered online (free).

#### **Platform sex education**

The platform for sex educators has been founded in South Tyrol in 2009, after a longer period of preliminary work. Currently there are about 50 sex educators working in South Tyrol; they have been striving for the establishment of this platform, in order to ensure the quality of their work in the long run, to intensify the networking and the options for cooperation. The sex educators, who are organised in the platform, represent an emancipatory approach of sex education, which assists people in living their sexuality in a responsible and self-determined way. The sex educators work at schools, in youth work and in andragogy; they deal with topics, such as body, emotions, relationships and prevention of sexual abuse. The Youth Office, together with the education authority, conducted establishing the platform and supports its development.

#### **Project “Letters to Parents”**

The project has started after more than a year of intense and exciting preliminary work: So far the following letters to the parents have been published 1. “Pregnancy and Birth”, 2. “Easy through the first months”, 3. “6-12 Months, Your Baby Explores the World” 4. “12-24 Months, Walking, Speaking, Doing it Yourself” and 5. “Understanding Contexts, Develop Self-confidence (24/36 Month)”. Additionally, not part of this series, a letter to parents for adolescents between 10 and 13 years will be published.

The goal of the initiative is to accompany the parents in the education and relationship work, which is getting more and more complex.

72 % of all parents, who received a child, have been ordering the letters to the parents since. So far there have been more than 3000 orders since January 2011.



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe



### Further Initiatives

Publishing a summer holiday programme +++ youth exchange programmes +++ European Voluntary Service (EVS) +++ placement of cultural offers for youth clubs +++ project regarding the improvement of intercultural competences +++ brochure “summer jobs” +++ youth study 2010 +++ network youth work +++ alliance of confidence +++ handbook of political education +++ regional advisory board on youth

“Youth work in South Tyrol has become an important pillar in the field of education in the past decades, in addition to families and schools. It offers young people a diverse field of acceptance and experiences, which encourages social engagement and democratic behaviour.”

Prof. Dr. Benedikt Sturzenhecker, at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the association “Youth Club Kassianeum” on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 in Brixen

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Table of contents ▶



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### Further Topics

#### Research: Why do retailers (not) comply with the legislation on sales of alcohol?

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A Dutch research group of the University Twente Enschede has published a study, which is – especially for TAKE CARE – quite interesting: “Why should I comply? Sellers’ accounts for (non-) compliance with legal age limits for alcohol sales” (Jordy F Gosselt, Joris J Van Hoof and Menno DT De Jong).

The researchers analyse test purchases by minors as well as telephone interviews. They conclude that the awareness of retailers about the relevance of age limits at sales of alcohol has to be improved. Furthermore, they hold it important, that there are negative consequences in case of infringements of the law. You may find the study at:

#### Further Information:

[www.substanceabusepolicy.com](http://www.substanceabusepolicy.com)

[Table of contents ▶](#)

#### 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Family-Based Prevention and Positive Parenting

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IREFREA, our partner from Portugal, points to this conference. It will focus on the wide range of issues that affect the physical and mental health and well-being of families. This includes: alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use; violence and anti-social behaviour; parenting skills; parenting styles; family-based preventive interventions, practices and policies; and family legislation.

The conference will take place from 8-10 June 2012 in Ljubljana (Slovenia). Hosts will be the Institute for Research and Development “Utrip” (Slovenia) and Lutra Group (USA).

#### Further Information:

[www.familypreventionljubljanajana2012.com](http://www.familypreventionljubljanajana2012.com)

[Table of contents ▶](#)



## Strategies towards responsible alcohol consumption for adolescents in Europe

### **Announcement:**

### **International Expert Conference in Münster/Germany on 24th and 25th October 2012**

### **„Problematic Alcohol Consumption by Adolescents in the Public Space“**

Already today, we would like to draw the attention of all TAKE CARE supporters and everybody else, who is interested, on the fact that the results of the project will be presented during an international expert congress on 24th and 25th October 2012 in Münster/Germany. In addition to the presentation of the concept of TAKE CARE and the results of the project, further national and international best-practice concepts will be presented and discussed.

There should be an exchange among experts on the topics of risky consumption, orientation in social environment and multilevel approach. At a panel discussion we will be aiming for a definition of risky alcohol consumption and potential cut off limits. We would be happy, if you could put that date into your scheduler. A more elaborate invitation for this conference is going to follow before long. If you are interested, please contact Kathrin Horre.

Kathrin Horre

### **Further information:**

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[Table of contents ▶](#)