

eurocare

European Alcohol Policy Alliance



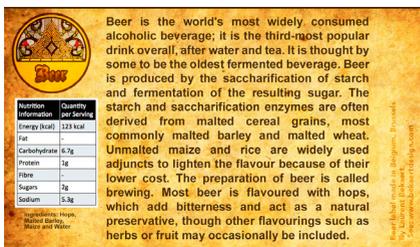
The European Alcohol Policy Alliance (EUROCARE)

is an alliance of non- governmental and public health organisations with around 51 member organisations across 23 European countries advocating the prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm in Europe. Member organisations are involved in advocacy and research, as well as in the provision of information and training on alcohol issues and the service for people whose lives are affected by alcohol problems.

The mission of Eurocare is to promote policies to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm. **The message, in regard to alcohol consumption is "less is better"**

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EXAMPLE OF ALCOHOL HEALTH WARNING LABEL



Beer is the world's most widely consumed alcoholic beverage; it is the third-most popular drink overall, after water and tea. It is thought by some to be the oldest fermented beverage. Beer is produced by the saccharification of starch and fermentation of the resulting sugar. The starch and saccharification enzymes are often derived from malted cereal grains, most commonly malted barley and malted wheat. Unmalted maize and rice are widely used adjuncts to lighten the flavour because of their lower cost. The preparation of beer is called brewing. Most beer is flavoured with hops, which add bitterness and act as a natural preservative, though other flavourings such as herbs or fruit may occasionally be included.

Nutrition Information	Quantity	Per Serving
Energy (kcal)	123	kcal
Fat	-	
Carbohydrate	6.7g	
Protein	3g	
Fibre	-	
Sugars	2g	
Sodium	5.3g	

Ingredients: Hops, Malted Barley, Malt and Water

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5.2% alc./vol
52ml alc./litre
333ml

per 333ml
kcal
123



ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE CANCER

If you are concerned about your alcohol consumption, call [appropriate help line and phone number] or visit [appropriate website].



Introduction

Eurocare proudly presents the second library of alcohol health warning labels. It is Eurocare's wish that this proposal will serve as a starting point for much needed discussion around labelling of alcoholic beverages in the European Union (EU).

Over the last years Eurocare has been advocating for introduction of health warning messages.

The Eurocare report: 'What's not on the bottle? Brief overview of state of play in the alcohol labelling' (December 2011) gives an overview of the different initiatives taken in this area around the world and summarises the main research findings on effectiveness of warning labels.

In the long term, it is Eurocare's hope that a library of health warning messages will be prepared at the EU level by the European Commission. Moreover, it should be made available to all EU Member States and alcohol producers.

In this document Eurocare would like to present its recommendations and ideas for such a library. It is hoped that they will be a constructive starting point for preparation of library of health warning labels at the EU level, similar to that which has already been developed for tobacco products.

Rationale

Product labels can serve a number of purposes, providing information about the product to the consumer, enticing the consumer to buy the product and warning consumers of dangers and health risks from the product.

Promoting consumers rights, prosperity and wellbeing are core values of the European Union (EU) and this is reflected in its laws. Consequently, the Directive on General Product Safety obliges producers 'to provide consumers with relevant information to enable them to assess the risks inherent in a product (...) where such risks are not immediately obvious without adequate warnings'^[1]

[1] DIRECTIVE 2001/95/EC; <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:011:0004:0004:EN:PDF>

France is the only EU Member State which has introduced mandatory health warning labels which inform about the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant. Eurocare would like this initiative expanded across all Member States and across other areas of alcohol related harm.

Alcohol is a cause in some 60 diseases and conditions however public awareness about the risks associated with alcohol consumption remains relatively low. For instance, despite the research dating back to 1987 that conclusively points out to the carcinogenicity of all alcoholic beverages^[2], the connection between alcohol and cancer is not well known by the consumers. The 2010 Eurobarometer report found that 1 in 10 European citizens do not know that there is a connection and what is especially alarming, is that 1 in 5 do not believe the connection^[3].

There is a clear public health obligation to inform consumers of the dangers and health risks associated with the consumption of alcohol and this is backed up with substantial public support. The Eurobarometer 2010 reports that overwhelming majority of the European Union population (79%) would agree with putting warnings on alcohol labels to warn pregnant women and drivers of the dangers of drinking alcohol.

Warning labels can increase knowledge and change in the perception of risks associated with alcohol consumption. Studies show that warning labels are noticed by most drinkers, especially by young and high risk drinkers and prompt target groups to discuss health effects of drinking (especially early after their introduction)^[4]. Evidence also suggests that the recall of warning labels was associated with being less likely to report having engaged in drunk driving^[5].

[2] International Agency for Research on Cancer (1987) Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans

Volume 44: Alcohol Drinking. <http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Monographs/vol44/volume44.pdf>

[3] Eurobarometer (2010) EU citizens' attitudes towards alcohol http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_331_en.pdf

[4] Babor, T., Caetano, R., Casswell, S., Edwards, G., Giesbrecht N., Hill L., Holder H., Homel R., Osterberg E., Rehm J., Room R. and Rossow I. (2003) Alcohol: No ordinary commodity – research and public policy. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Greenfield T. (1997) Warning Labels: Evidence on harm reduction from long-term American surveys. In: Plant M., Single E. and Stockwell T. (Eds.) Alcohol: Minimizing the harm. London: Free Association Books.

[5] Greenfield T. (1997) Warning Labels: Evidence on harm reduction from long-term American surveys. In: Plant M., Single E. and Stockwell T. (Eds.) Alcohol: Minimizing the harm. London: Free Association Books

The studies from the US, note that warning labels have prompted discussions about the dangers of drinking and there is evidence of increased support for alcohol labeling by the US public following its introduction^{[6] [7]}. In addition, a 'dose-response' effect was found showing when people were frequently exposed to warnings (on adverts at point of-sale, in magazines and on containers) the more likely they were to have discussed the issue^[8].

In France it has been found that there has been somewhat of a change to the social norm surrounding alcohol during pregnancy. This is thought to be related to the introduction of the health warning labels in 2006^[9]. Alcohol warning labels have also been found to deter others from driving under the influence of alcohol^[10]. This further illustrated how health warnings may play a role in changing social norms and public acceptability.

It could plausibly be argued that where relatively strict warning label regulations have been used, there has indeed been a shift towards regarding alcohol as more problematic and heavier drinking as less 'normalised'^[11].

As a single measure, it is unlikely that warning labels will, result in a substantial reduction in hazardous alcohol consumption or specific risk behaviours such as drinking and driving.

Labels need to be regarded as an opportunity for impact over time and as a part of a comprehensive strategy, rather than expecting that they will affect behavioural change immediately.

[6] Greenfield (1997) in Stockwell T. (2006) A Review of Research Into The Impacts of Alcohol warning Labels On Attitudes And Behaviour. University of Victoria, Canada.

[7] (Kaskutas and Greenfield 1992). In Stockwell T. (2006) A Review of Research Into The Impacts of Alcohol warning Labels On Attitudes And Behaviour. University of Victoria, Canada.

[8] Ibid

[9] Guillemont J. (2009) Labelling on alcoholic drinks packaging: The French experience. Presentation to the CNAPA meeting, February 2009 retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/ev_20090217_co08_en.pdf

[10] Tam, W. T. Et al (2010) Do Alcohol Warning Labels Influence Men's and Women's Attempts to Deter Others from Driving When Intoxicated?. Human factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing Service Industries, 20 (6), 538-546

[11] Wilkinson C. and Room R. (2009) Warnings on alcohol containers and advertisements: International experience and evidence on effects. Drug and Alcohol Review, 28, 426-435

Introduction of health warning messages on alcohol labels throughout the EU would prove a cost effective measure, to significantly raise public awareness about the risks associated with alcohol consumption.



HEALTH WARNINGS ON ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES SHOULD:

- Be placed in a standard location on the container
- Be parallel to the base of the container
- Be clearly separate from other information of the label i.e. be placed in boxes with thick red borders
- Size should be determined by a minimum percentage of the size of the container
- Be written in capital letters and bold type
- Appear on a contrasting background (red bold type on white) warnings printed in red compared to black lead to improved noticeability
- Be rotating and with sufficient vividness and strength to attract consumers
- Use images that are informational in style and taken from other ongoing education campaigns, this would enhance their effectiveness
- Be in the official language of the country in which the products is sold
- Be determined by the European Institution/ Agency or Ministers of Health (public body not private agency)

LIBRARY OF HEALTH WARNING MESSAGES

Health warnings on alcoholic beverages should be clear messages about the harm to the individual and others. These messages should cover all relevant health issues like, liver cirrhosis, cancers, mental health as well as risk of injuries and violence. In addition, specific messages should warn of the dangers of consuming alcohol during pregnancy, when driving, operating machinery or taking certain medication.

Health warning messages should be accompanied by a recommendation for action.

For example:

'If you are concerned about your alcohol consumption, call [appropriate help line and phone number] or visit [appropriate website].

This message could be in smaller font than the health message. Pictogram should be accompanied with a health warning messages corresponding to it.



**ALCOHOL MAY HARM THE UNBORN
BABY**



**ALCOHOL MAY HARM
THE UNBORN BABY**



**ALCOHOL SLOWS YOUR REACTION
TIME - DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE**



**ALCOHOL SLOWS YOUR REACTION
TIME - DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE**



DON'T SERVE ALCOHOL TO MINORS



**DON'T SERVE ALCOHOL
TO MINORS**



**DON'T DRINK WHILE OPERATING
MACHINERY**



**DON'T DRINK WHILE OPERATING
MACHINERY**



**ALCOHOL INCREASES THE RISK OF
ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**



**ALCOHOL INCREASES THE RISK
OF ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**



**ALCOHOL CAN
CAUSE DEPENDENCE**



**ALCOHOL CAN
CAUSE DEPENDENCE**



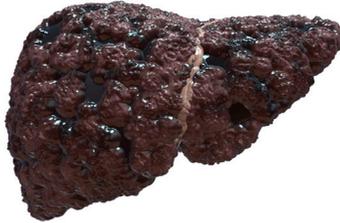
**ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**



**ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**



**ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE
LIVER CIRRHOSIS**



**ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE
LIVER CIRRHOSIS**



**DON'T DRINK
WHEN TAKING MEDICINE**



**DON'T DRINK
WHEN TAKING MEDICINE**



ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE CANCER



ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE CANCER



A Cause for Action

Alcohol is the 3rd leading cause of ill-health and death in the EU

Alcohol is one of the world's leading health risks

- Europe is the heaviest drinking region of the world
- Consumption levels in some European countries are around 2.5 times higher than the global average
- Alcohol is one of the top 4 risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer and cardiovascular disease.
- Alcohol is a toxic substance in terms of its direct and indirect effects on a wide range of body organs and systems and a cause of some 60 diseases
- 23 million people in the EU are dependent on alcohol

Use of alcohol is especially harmful for young people

- 43% among 15-16 year old Europeans student report heavy binge drinking
- Alcohol is the biggest cause of death among young men of age 16 to 24
- 9 million children and young people in the EU live with at least one parent addicted to alcohol

Alcohol harms the society

- Around 1 accident in 4 can be linked to alcohol consumption, and at least 10 000 people are killed in alcohol related road accidents in the EU each year.
- NCDs to which alcohol is one of the top risk factors, are estimated to cause a €25 trillion global economic output loss over the period of 2005-2030
- The social cost attributable to alcohol is 155,8 billion EUR yearly
- Alcohol is the world's number 1 risk for ill health and premature death for 25-59 year old age group- core of the working age population

