



LEADING BY EXAMPLE DELIVERING LOCAL ACTIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE BEER CONSUMPTION

Europe's brewers take the lead in fighting alcohol related harm

Brussels – 13 March 2009 - The Brewers of Europe, the European brewing association, today launched a report demonstrating the sector's leading role in the fight against alcohol misuse at a Brussels symposium on responsible beer consumption. The report summarises the progress made in fulfilling the commitments pledged under the EU Alcohol and Health Forum.

Presenting an interim report on the implementation of the industry's measures committed to under the Forum, Alberto da Ponte, President of The Brewers of Europe, said: "I am proud of the European brewing sector's engagement in the fight against alcohol abuse and its long tradition of working in local partnerships to achieve this goal. We welcome the Alcohol and Health Forum as an incentive to step up our efforts to combat alcohol abuse which have made us the leading contributor to the process."

The report shows Europe's brewers accounting for more than one third of the total commitments pledged by all the members of the Forum, which was set up in June 2007 by the European Commission uniting businesses, NGOs and other stakeholders to jointly work towards a solution to tackling the issue of alcohol-related harm.

Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Health commenting on the report, said: "I welcome the commitments made by the Brewers of Europe in the context of the EU Alcohol and Health Forum. This Forum will serve as a test to show how serious the signs we get from some economic operators are to be taken in the long run, and how strong the commitment of alcohol producers, retailers, caterers and advertisers towards reducing alcohol-related harm really is. I am following the process closely and I will base further initiatives, if any, on the results produced by the Forum."

Out of the 101 total commitments so far filed under the forum, 36 have come from The Brewers of Europe - the umbrella organisation for Europe's national brewing associations - and four international brewing companies with strong European roots, namely AB-Inbev, Heineken, SAB Miller and Carlsberg.

Whilst the Brewers of Europe's commitments do include one major EU wide commitment, a key feature of the member associations' measures is the local element. "Whether it involves putting in place measures aimed at addressing the binge-drinking phenomenon in Finland,

tackling underage consumption in Belgium, Germany, Poland and Romania, discouraging drunk-driving in Denmark, Poland and Spain or further strengthening self-regulation systems in the Czech Republic – Europe’s brewers are on the case and doing their bit,” da Ponte said.

A leading example for The Brewers of Europe’s actions was the ‘Drunk, you’re a fool’ education campaign launched by the Finnish brewers in August 2007, which not only provided encouraging results, but even won a series of international awards and praise from DG SANCO. Also highlighted in Mr da Ponte’s speech was the campaign of the Italian brewers, for which the national brewing association teamed up with the Italian association of obstetricians and gynaecologists along with the Italian Health Ministry with a simple message, ‘if you’re expecting a child, alcohol can wait.’

“By building partnerships, by working on the ground and by developing local actions, we will make rapid progress,” da Ponte said, pledging to continue to work closely with the European Commission and the other partners in the EU Alcohol and Health Forum. The key to our success is a voluntary approach at the local level, rather than a pan-European ‘one size fits all’ approach,” he pointed out.

Concluding, da Ponte stressed “we will always endeavour to brew beer responsibly, to market beer responsibly and we want our central message to be that beer should always be consumed responsibly. If this is the case, beer, as a ‘wholesome, good product’, has its place in a healthy lifestyle.”

The Brewers of Europe Interim Report on the Commitments to the EU Alcohol and Health Forum is available for download from www.brewersofeurope.org

(ENDS)

For further information, please contact:
Niall Doheny
Head of Communications
The Brewers of Europe

e-mail: nd@brewersofeurope.org
Tel: +32 (0)2 551 18 10

Note to the editors

The Brewers of Europe, founded in 1958 and based in Brussels, is the voice of the European brewing sector to the European institutions and international organisations. It has 27 members, comprising 24 national brewers’ associations from EU Member States plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. Of the roughly 3,000 brewers across Europe, the vast majority are small and medium-sized, local and family-run establishments. Today, 2.6 million jobs are directly and indirectly attributable to the European brewing sector.

For more on The Brewers of Europe, visit www.brewersofeurope.org



The Brewers of Europe
50 years of service, 5000 years of tradition

