Recommendation 1136 (1990)[1]

European policy on alcohol

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Grave health and social problems are related to the excessive consumption of alcohol.

2. The costs of excessive alcohol consumption pose a considerable burden on our societies both in human and economic terms.

3. Excessive drinking can impose suffering on innocent people, as through motor vehicle accidents.

4. Widely divergent alcohol traditions in different parts of Europe call for different national strategies in the effort to reduce the consumption of alcohol.

5. Such national strategies may entail different levels of taxation in various countries ; and fiscal harmonisation measures, however desirable in the pursuit of European integration, should allow for such variations to be retained.

6. Cultural differences must also be taken into account in efforts to promote education and information about the physical and social effects of alcohol.

7. Nevertheless, there is also an important European dimension to the problem, and this warrants the elaboration of a common European policy on alcohol.

8. The strength of producer, distributor and fiscal interests in the shaping of alcohol-related policy decisions is considerable and much greater weight should be given to public health considerations in the formulation of national alcohol policies.

9. The Committee of Ministers has already made recommendations on questions pertaining to alcohol - in particular, on prevention of alcohol-related problems among young people ; on prevention of drug dependence and the special role of education for health ; and on strategies to combat smoking, alcohol and drug dependence in co-operation with opinion-makers and the media, including certain provisionsof the European Convention on Transfrontier Television.

10. Moreover, member states of the World Health Organisation have undertaken to promote lifestyles conducive to health, with the target for 1995 of significant decreases in health-damaging behaviour — such as over-use of alcohol and pharmaceutical products, use of illicit drugs and dangerous chemical substances, dangerous driving and violent social behaviour.

11. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. urge governments of member states to adopt national targets for reducing alcohol consumption in line with the global strategy of ‘‘health for all by the year 2000" of the World Health Organisation ;

b. promote the introduction at both national and local levels of comprehensive programmes aimed at combating the abuse of alcohol by young people ;

c. instruct its European Health Committee :

1. to convene a group of experts for the purpose of sharing information and experience,

1. Assembly debate on 4 October 1990 (18th Sitting) (see Doc. 6250, report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mr Tarschys). Text adopted by the Assembly on 4 October 1990 (18th Sitting).

2. to reappraise and develop accordingly national strategies for combating immoderate consumption and preventing abuse ;

d. promote arrangements as soon as possible for discussion of alcohol policies in Europe at ministerial level.