



A new EU Alcohol Strategy: A Swedish perspective

Jenny Cisneros Örnberg

Centre for Social research on Alcohol and
Drugs (SoRAD)

APN October 17, 2012

In short

- Swedish alcohol policy
- Swedish efforts and contributions on EU level.
- Why a EU alcohol strategy?
- Effects on Swedish alcohol policy?
- Important strategies to develop a new EU alcohol strategy

3 pillars in Swedish alcohol policy

- Limited availability
- High prices
- Lack of private profit

- (strong support for a restrictive alcohol policy)

Changes in Swedish alcohol policy

- Abolished monopolies (import, export, wholesale and production)
- Higher import quotas (1 jan 2004)
- Changed rules on alcohol advertising (May 2003)
- Lower prices
- Increased availability
- Increased consumption
- Questioning of Systembolaget
- A shift in balance from national to international and local level

Increased possibilities on EU level

- The social Europe
- New MS
- Increased focus on alcohol related harm
- Changes in drinking patterns
- Increasing field of knowledge
- EU-Court

Swedish initiatives/contributions



- ECAS
- Council Recommendation (2001/458/EC).
- Invitation to the Commission to put forward proposals for a comprehensive community strategy aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm
- Seconded national alcohol policy expert to DG SANCO in 2004.
- 2009: *Conclusions on alcohol and health*, inviting the Commission to define priorities for the next phase of the Commission's work on alcohol and health after the end of the current strategy.

Growing consensus

- Protecting young people, children and the unborn child
- Reducing injuries and deaths from alcohol-related road traffic accidents
- Preventing alcohol-related harm among adults and reducing the negative impact on the workplace
- To inform and raise awareness on the impact of harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption and on appropriate consumption patterns
- Support research.

Still controversial

- High taxes
- Restrictions on sales/serving to adults (for example opening hours or other limitations of availability)
- Harmonization of warning labels, age- and BAC limits
- Advertising

Why an EU alcohol strategy?

- Internal market obstruct divergent national alcohol policies
- Harmonization in drinking patterns
- Reframing of alcohol from a market and agricultural question to a health question
- Common platform for MS and stakeholders
- Pressure system

Effects on Swedish alcohol policy

- The conflict between the EU inner market and traditional Swedish public health policy were greater than expected (juridification and negative integration).
- Foothold for national market forces to challenge prevailing alcohol structure
- Already ongoing liberalization trend.
- Positive effects possible in the long run.

A new EU Alcohol Strategy - important strategies

- Priority
- Anchorage
- Baby steps
- Smallest common denominator