

# Alcohol Labelling



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**CRIOC**

Centre de Recherche et d'Information  
des Organisations de Consommateurs



# Outline

- A Policy Delphi survey
  - Context and process
  - Objectives and methodology
  - Participation
- General analysis of the results
- Conclusions

# A Policy Delphi survey (1)

- Pathways for Health Project (PHP) on binge drinking, drink driving and health labelling, coordinated by DHS.

[http://www.suchtwoche.net/web/dhs\\_international/pathways.php](http://www.suchtwoche.net/web/dhs_international/pathways.php)

- The Delphi survey was carried out by CRIOC, a consumer research centre.
- Labelling can be understood as one measure in a more general comprehensive approach to reduce alcohol-related harm ⇒ “consumer information concerning alcoholic beverages”

# A Policy Delphi survey (2)

- A dialectical process during which experts are questioned: Each expert can comment his answers  $\Rightarrow$  everyone is given feedback on the whole set of responses  $\Rightarrow$  respondents are asked to confirm or adapt their answers based on the new information
- Overall objective of a Delphi survey: to expose all the different options and opinions regarding an issue and the principal pro and con arguments for these positions
- In a Policy Delphi survey generating a consensus is not the prime goal

# Objectives of the Policy Delphi survey

- **Overall goals:**
  - To determine the impact and the consequences of a certain point of view
  - To examine and evaluate the acceptability of each opinion
  - To know all potential policy choices.
- **Operational goals of the applied method:**
  - To assure that all the points of view on the potential resolutions on alcohol labelling can be presented
  - To go deeper into all the reasons for these different views.

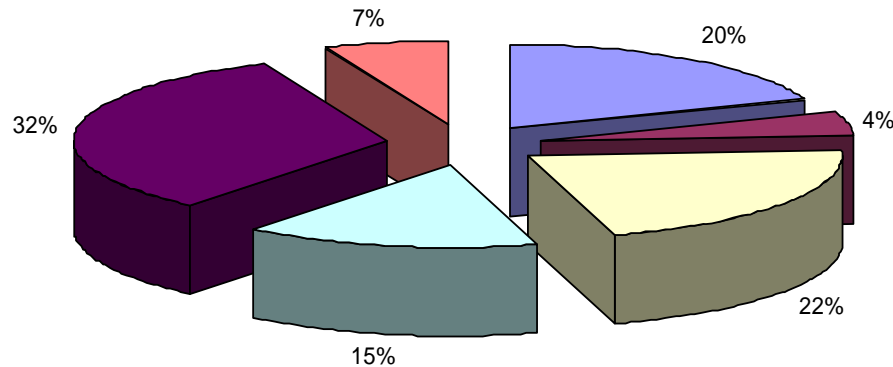
# Methodology of the survey

- Two consecutive phases in **June 2007**
  - Questionnaire with **20 statements** sent by mail
  - In the **second round** the questionnaire with the results of the first round was sent again to all 212 experts (anonymity was guaranteed)
- **Sample of 212 experts** belonging to the different stakeholders:
  - Federations of producers (21) , catering (2) , distributors (2)
  - Non-governmental organisations dealing with prevention (51)
  - Governmental institutions from 27 Member States (83)
  - Consumer organisations (47)
  - Media (6)
- **Analysis** of answers and comments for each statement

# Participation

## Total of contacts and respondents of the two rounds

Respondents both rounds (total = 46)



Group	Contacts	Response		
		1st	2nd	Total
Media	6	-	-	-
Producers alcohol beverages	21	7	8	9
Catering & Distribution	4	2	1	2
Non-governmental Organizations	51	7	8	10
Consumers' Organizations	47	7	3	7
Government Dept. Health	60	13	11	15
Government Other	23	2	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>46</b>

- First round: 38 respondents (18%)
- Second round: 17 confirmations, 16 supplementary comments, 8 new respondents
- Total: 46 respondents (22%)

# Questionnaire (1) : do you agree... not agree

1	The government is responsible for the protection of the consumer. This responsibility includes regulating the communication concerning alcohol products (advertising, public information campaigns, presentation in catering, pubs and shops...)
2	Health warnings on alcohol containers have a negligible effect on public drinking behaviour and will not reduce harmful drinking.
3	The consumers need to be mainly sensitized through education and public information campaigns, in order to promote wise alcohol use.
4	Every container holding an alcoholic beverage needs to have a label with a health warning.
5	Health warnings need to stipulate the various negative effects on health from harmful alcohol use. Alternating messages should be communicated, randomly chosen from a predefined pool of warnings.
6	All the way through their education youngsters need to be clearly informed about the risks and responsible use of alcohol.
7	Health warnings on labels of alcohol products are a necessary element in a global strategy to prevent harmful alcohol use.
8	Advertisements may not target youngsters between 12 and 18 years old or use communication channels regularly frequented by this group (no ads during youth programs on radio or TV, no ads in youth magazines, no ads on websites that are regularly frequented by youngsters).
9	Children under the age of 12 have to be legally protected from alcohol advertisements and distribution.
10	Voluntary codes of conduct formulated by the alcohol industry are sufficient to enforce a responsible communication strategy for alcohol drinks.

# Questionnaire (2) : do you agree... not agree

11	Every form of communication (radio or TV spot, advertising in written and electronic press...) on alcohol drinks needs to be accompanied by a clear health warning.
12	Alcohol consumption is an important factor in social life and should therefore not be stigmatized by means of mandatory health warnings (on labels, in advertisements...).
13	Where health warnings need to be present on the label, they should be on the front of the label and easily distinguishable from other information on the label.
14	Health warnings need to focus only on high risk groups, e.g. drivers and pregnant women.
15	When a new policy is to be outlined, alcohol pops and other alcohol products, known to be popular drinks amongst youngsters, should be prioritized.
16	Alcohol publicity must be forbidden.
17	Additional information concerning substances that could induce allergic reactions needs to be written on the label.
18	Alcohol labels should mention a list of ingredients and nutritional properties of the beverage.
19	Pictograms or photographs are valid alternatives for textual health warnings.
20	Pubs and the catering business have a responsibility in the prevention of harmful alcohol use.



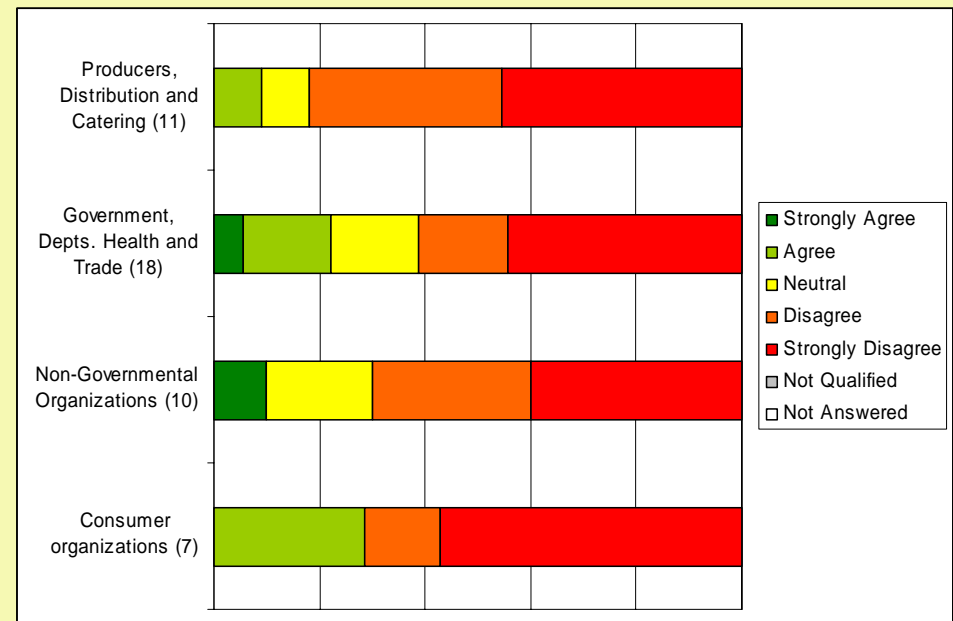
## Results (2) : A positive consensus

- For some statements exists a clear general and positive consensus:
  - All the way through their education, youngsters need to be clearly informed about the risks and responsible use of alcohol. (Q6)
  - Advertisements may not target youngsters between 12 and 18 years old or use communication channels regularly frequented by this group (no ads during youth programs on radio or TV, no ads in youth magazines, no ads on websites that are regularly frequented by youngsters). (Q8)
  - Children under the age of 12 have to be legally protected from alcohol advertisements and distribution. (Q9)
  - Pubs and the catering business have a responsibility in the prevention of harmful alcohol use. (Q20)

# Results (3) : A negative consensus

- For Q14 almost a general negative consensus in all groups exists:
  - Health warnings need to focus only on high risk groups, e.g. drivers and pregnant women. (Q14)

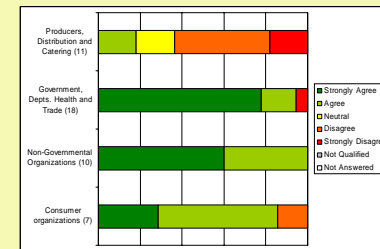
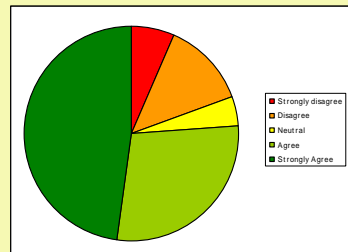
- The classification of the answers per category of respondents gives some indication about the divergence in views and the potential obstacles which can jeopardize a discussion. The arguments can be very opposite.



# Results (4) : Divided reactions

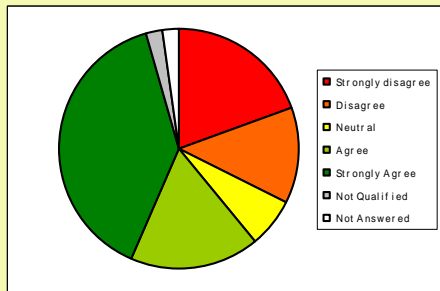
- **Between the groups:**

- The government is responsible for the protection of the consumer. This responsibility includes regulating the communication concerning alcohol products (advertising, public information campaigns, presentation in catering, pubs and shops...) (Q1)



- Where health warnings need to be present on the label, they should be on the front of the label and easily distinguishable from other information on the label. (Q13)
- Voluntary codes of conduct formulated by the alcohol industry are sufficient to enforce a responsible communication strategy for alcohol drinks. (Q10)
- Alcohol consumption is an important factor in social life and should therefore not be stigmatized by means of mandatory health warnings (on labels, in advertisements. . .) (Q12)

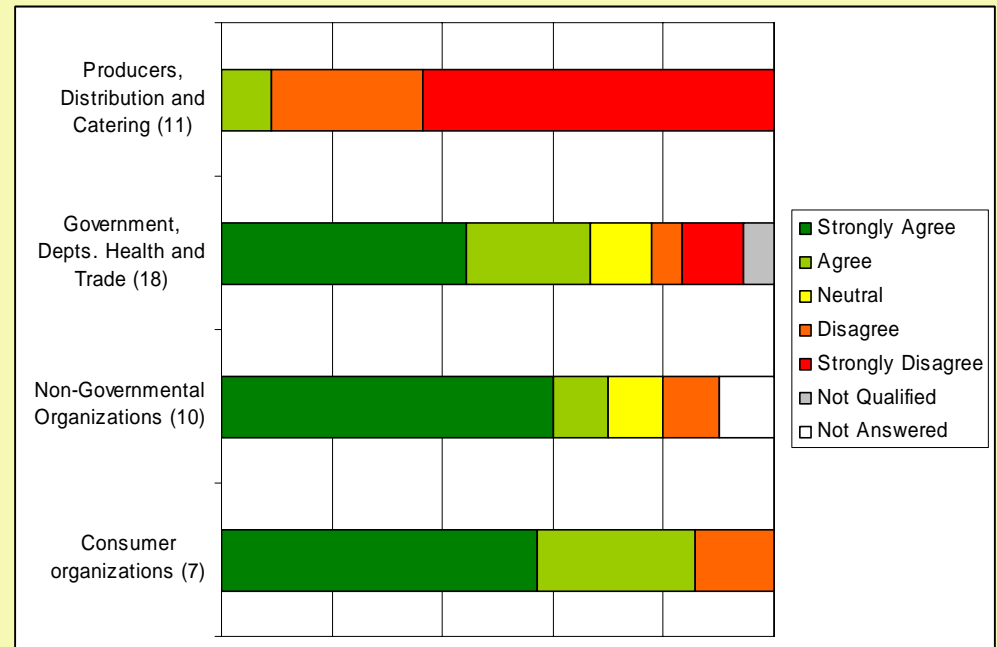
# Results (5) : Divided reactions



- For Q11, in general, the reactions are much more mixed.
  - **Every form of communication** (radio or TV spot, advertising in written and electronic press...) on alcohol drinks **needs to be accompanied by a clear health warning.**

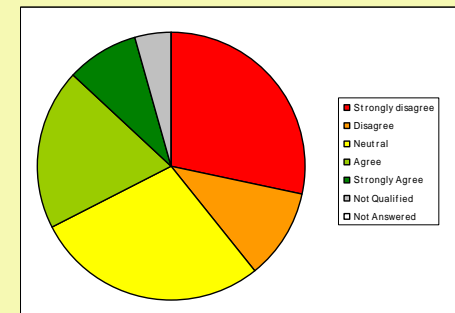
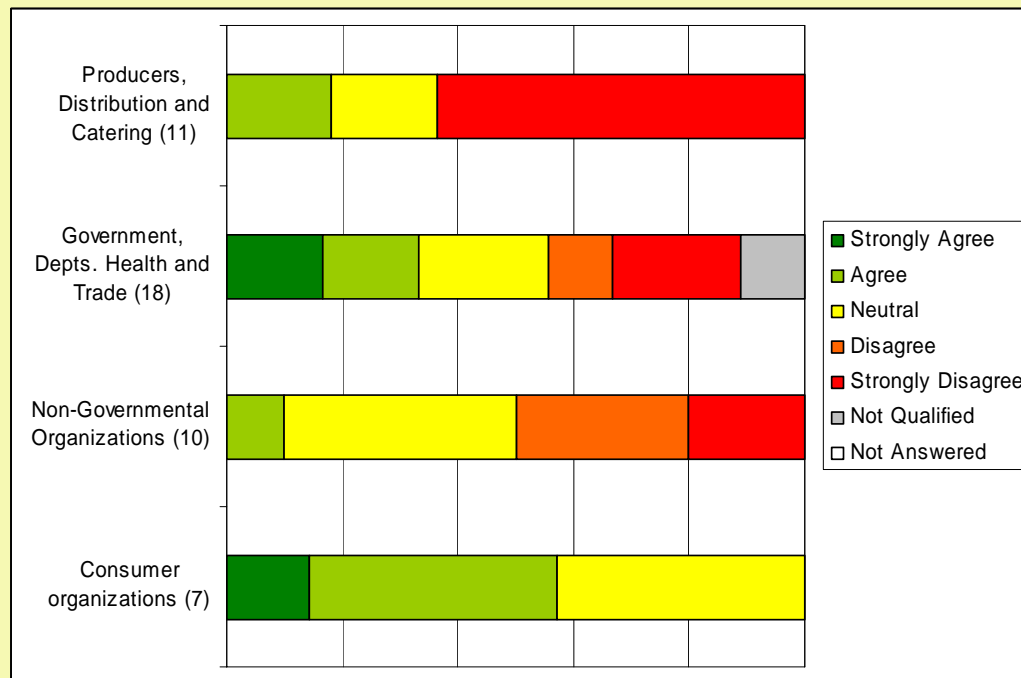
- Here\*, the extreme divergences of views isolate one group, namely the professionals from the offering side (producers, distributors & catering).

\* Idem Q4, Q5, Q7



# Results (6) : Divided reactions

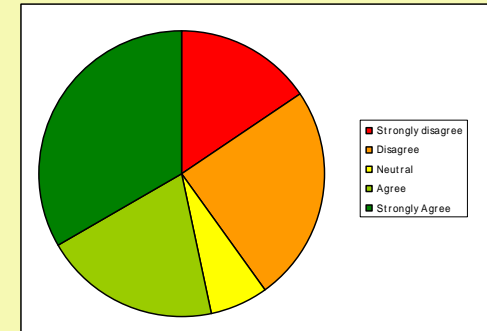
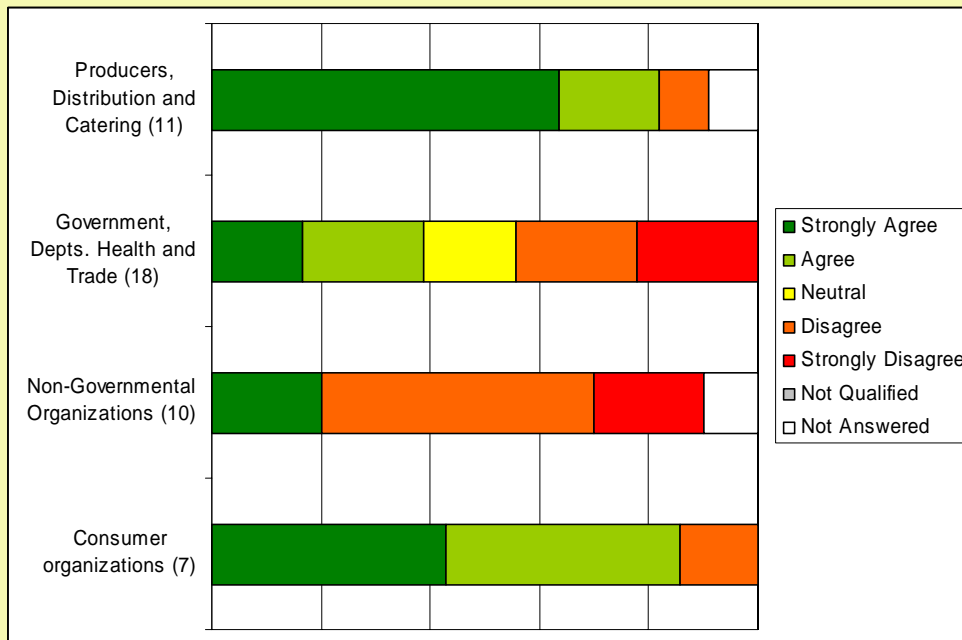
- No opinion dominates inside the groups and we find the same opinion in different groups: on e.g. the need for additional information linked to allergies (Q17), on ingredients and nutritional properties (Q18)



- Pictograms or photographs are valid alternatives for textual health warnings. (Q19)

# Results (7) Divided reactions

- As much divergences in views appear between the groups as well as inside the groups. (Q2, Q3, Q15 & Q16)



- The consumers need to be mainly sensitized through education and public information campaigns, in order to promote wise alcohol use. (Q3)

# Some conclusions (1)

- The **numerous comments** received in this process demonstrate the lively ideas and the numerous, sometimes very opposing, views. The results show how the issue is experienced and how different interests are at stake. Moreover, they reveal how delicate the discussion is.
- A large consensus exists on **the right of objective consumer information and its importance**. However, the definition of what is 'correct' and 'essential' information as well as the measures to be taken to optimise the effectiveness of this information are subject of debate. Especially the aspect of health warnings provoked many controversial reactions.

## Some conclusions (2)

- The results confirm in part, **the traditional breaches between the different stakeholders**. For instance, on the use of health warnings, and on which information should be mandatory, the respondents are much divided. The same divergence is noticed concerning the functioning of voluntary self-regulatory codes.

The sector very often expresses its aversion to the stigmatization of a product and underlines the importance of (responsible) alcohol consumption in social life.

- On the contrary, **an overall convergence on the protection of minors from alcohol advertising** reveals the need for a global approach for the prevention of alcohol misuse, for the important role of education, for a shared responsibility of all stakeholders. . .

# Final conclusion

- The report aims to **facilitate the debate** on alcohol labelling in a context of reduction of alcohol-related harm. By exposing all the different options and opinions and the principal pro and con arguments for these positions it sets out beakens for the debate, so that more profound discussions are possible without having to start all over every time.
- While more convergent opinions are shared and sometimes certain statements are less disputed than often thought, a good basis for a potential discussion exists.
- For some statements, the reactions are more opposite and the arguments divide the stakeholders more strongly. They **invite for more specific actions**: a search for new cooperation, new alliances which narrow traditional breaches but at the same time leave room for an evolution in the social reflection....

# Thank you Ingrid Vanhaevre

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