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# *Alcohol and Health – the EU Strategy*

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Director General  
Health and Consumer Protection  
European Commission*

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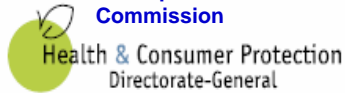
# Alcohol Communication 2006

## ■ Goals:

- 1) Protect **young people**, children and the unborn child
- 2) Reduce injuries and deaths from alcohol-related **road traffic** accidents
- 3) Prevent alcohol-related harm among adults and reduce the negative impact on the **workplace**
- 4) Inform, **educate** and raise awareness on the impact of harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption, and on appropriate consumption patterns
- 5) Develop, support and maintain a common **evidence** base



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# The way forward: Implementing the Strategy

- **Strong push for action needed to take advantage of improving environment:**
  - action in broad range of areas
  - action by great variety of stakeholders
  - action at all levels, from local to global
  - partnerships
- **EU approach – three main alleys:**
  - **Work across EU policies**
    - Public Health
    - Data and indicators
    - Transport, Education, Research, ....
  - **Cooperation with Member States:**
    - coordination of government-driven policies
    - review national and regional alcohol policy development – dissemination of best practice
  - **stakeholder partnership approach:**
    - multi-stakeholder platform “European Alcohol and Health Forum”



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# Implementing the Commission Communication

Committee on  
National Policy  
and Action

European  
Alcohol and  
Health Forum

Committee on  
Data  
Collection,  
Indicators and  
Definitions

Working  
across EU  
policies:  
Transport,  
Education,  
Youth,  
Agriculture etc.



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# European Alcohol and Health Forum



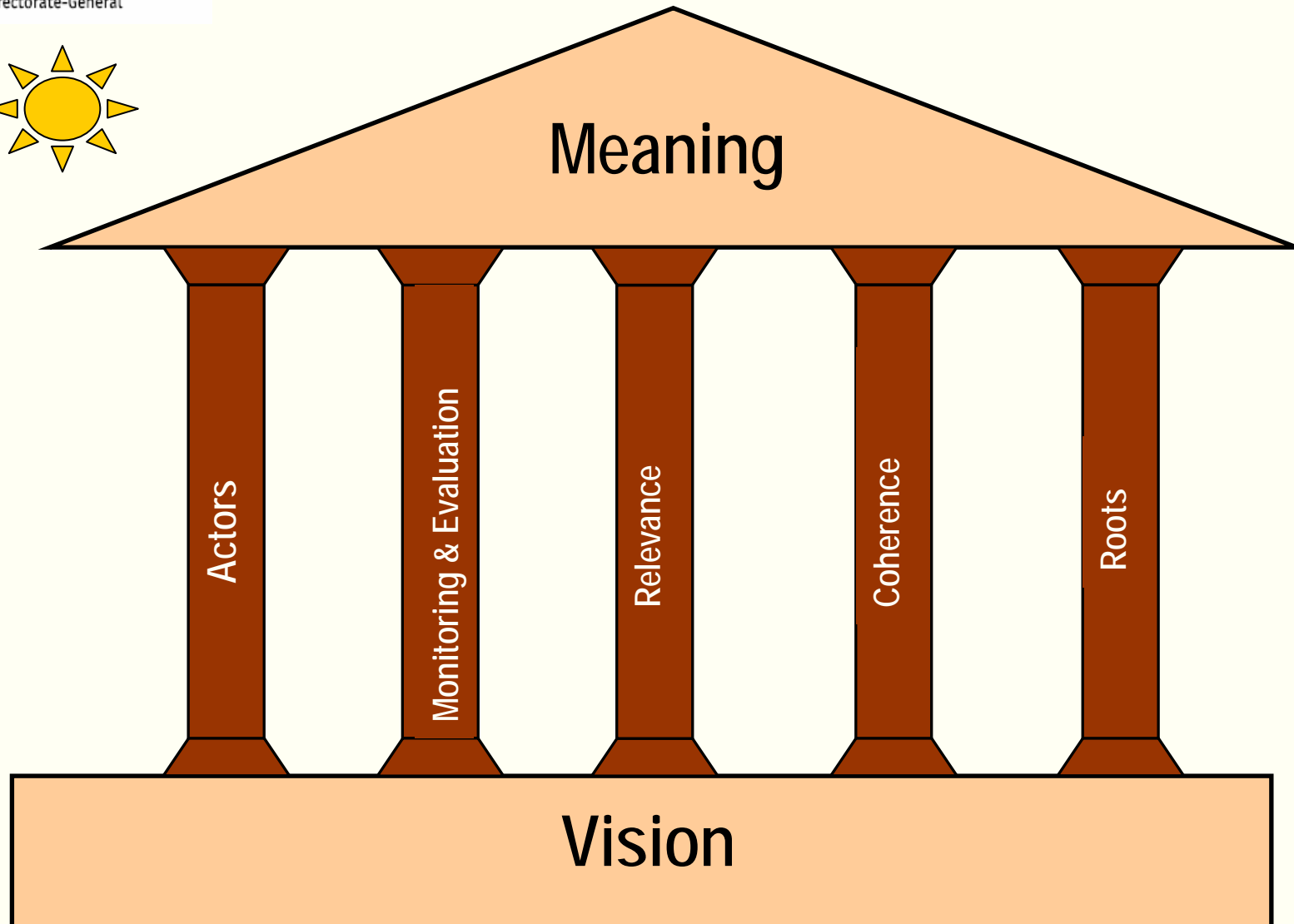
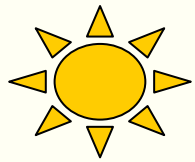
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# Key elements

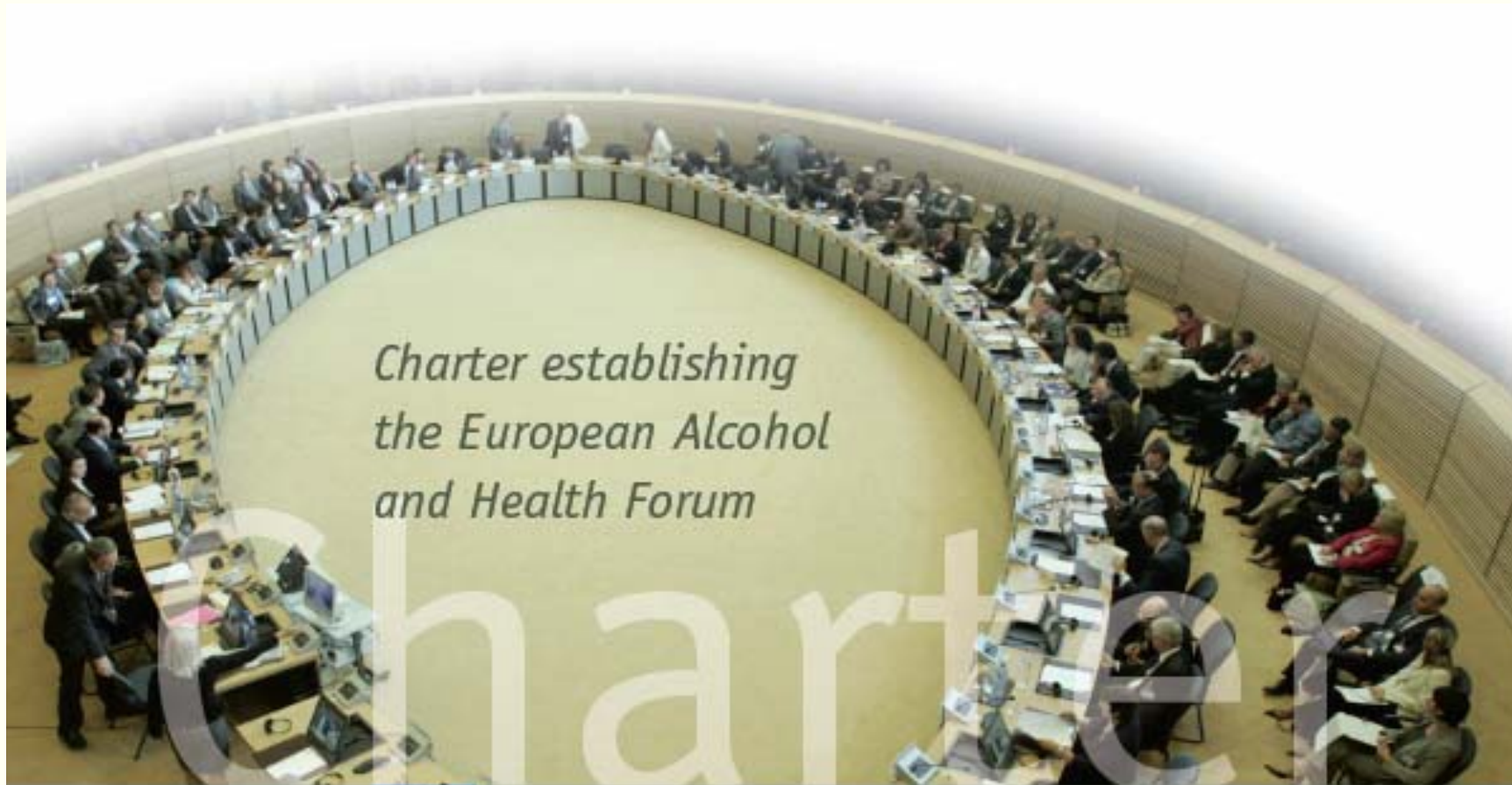




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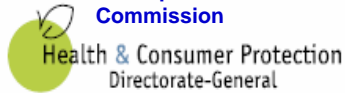
# European Alcohol and Health Forum



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# European Alcohol and Health Forum

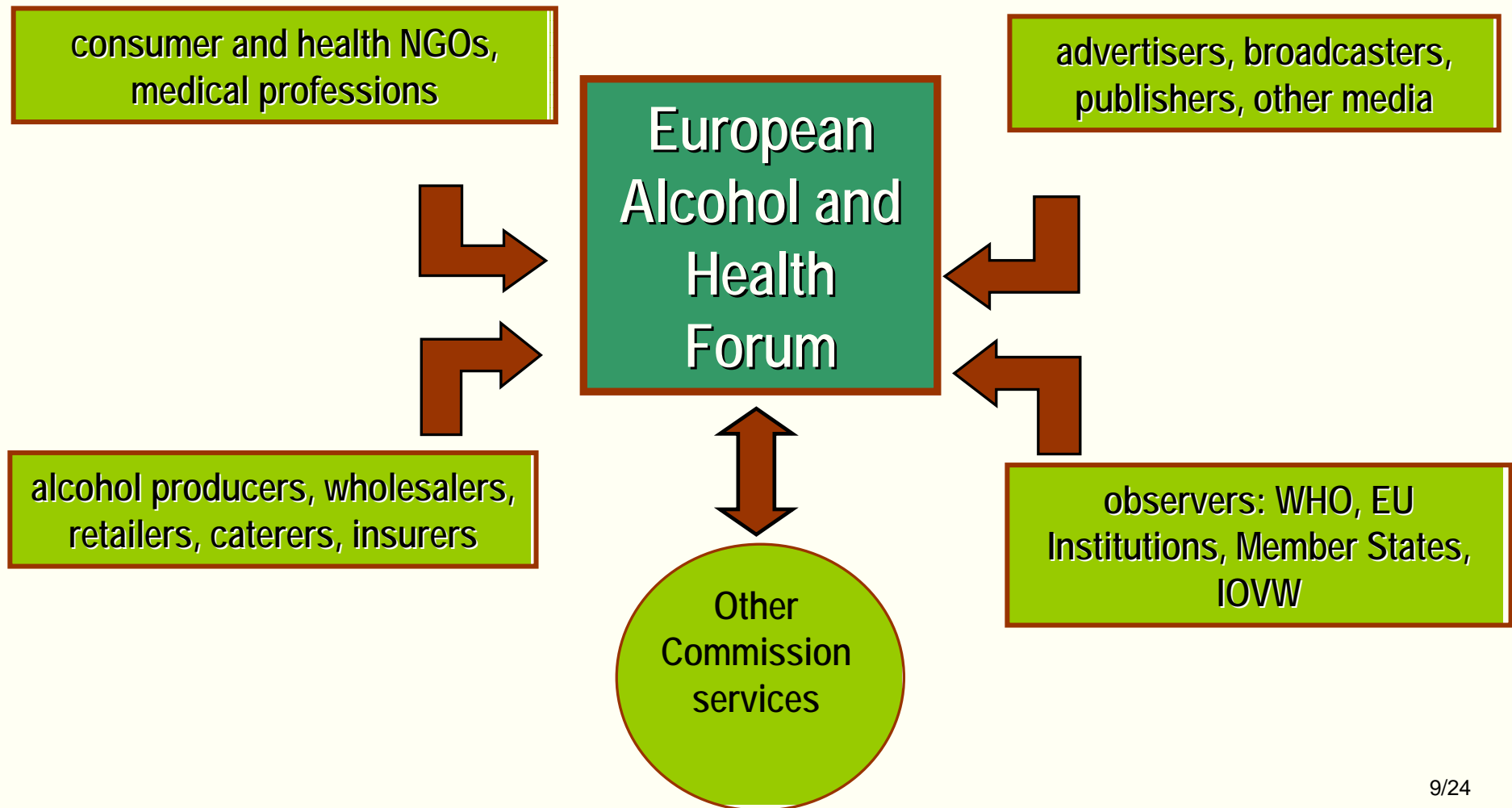
- overall objective:
  - provide common platform for all interested stakeholders at EU level willing to step up actions aimed at reducing alcohol harm
- main areas to be addressed:
  - under age drinking
  - information on effect of harmful drinking
  - responsible drinking/promote behavioural changes
  - consumer information
  - commercial communication



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# European Alcohol and Health Forum: participants



# European Alcohol and Health Forum: eligibility

- umbrella organisations operating at a European level
  - capable of playing active role in reducing alcohol-related harm in EU
  - willing to engage in concrete and verifiable commitments
- organisations operating at national or sub-national level, or individual companies
  - willing to engage in concrete and verifiable commitments
  - European-level umbrella organisation or federation needs to be Forum member
- 50 Founding Members at Forum launch,  
54 at present



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# European Alcohol and Health Forum: commitments

- members formally and publicly commit to concrete action
- commitments to reflect Forum members' objectives and resources
- commitments to indicate level of relevant current activities as baseline
- members to devote increasing level of effort beyond baseline to commitments
- commitments to indicate measurable objectives
- all commitments feed into public data base



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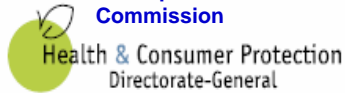
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# European Alcohol and Health Forum: monitoring, evaluation

- commitments monitored + evaluated in transparent, participative and accountable way
- outside involvement in reviewing progress and outcomes (to create trust in process)
- monitoring and evaluation plan for each commitment
  - in line with agreed monitoring guide
  - reports on input, output and outcomes of commitments (publicly available)
- periodic Commission reports on Forum progress



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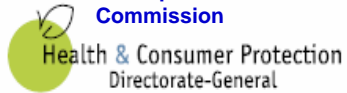
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# European Alcohol and Health Forum: commitments overview

- 78 commitments received so far
- Main areas targeted:
  - better cooperation/actions on responsible commercial communication and sales (29)
  - develop information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking (28)
  - develop information and education programmes on responsible patterns of consumption (19)
- Link to EU communication priority areas
- Main countries targeted:
  - EU-level: 32
  - Country level: United Kingdom: 51; Germany: 48; France: 47; Germany: 45; Italy & Romania: 46; Poland & Netherlands: 45; ... Cyprus & Lithuania: 37.



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# European Alcohol and Health Forum: commitments overview

- Main target groups
  - Young people (18-25): 15 (7 on young women)
  - Under age drinkers: 5
- Issues
  - Monitoring, (output) indicators, evaluation
  - Broaden coverage and issues
  - Build joint approaches and commitments



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# Youth Task Force

- **Priority areas:**
  - **curbing under-age drinking;**
  - **curbing drink-driving by young people;**
  - **educating and empowering young people on alcohol issues;**
  - **promoting responsible selling and serving of alcohol for young people;**
  - **protecting young people from the consequences of alcohol abuse by others.**



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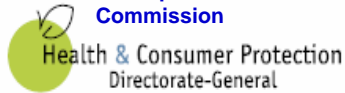
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# Youth Task Force – outcomes and proposals

- **Agreement on principles**
  - how to influence social norms - supporting underage drinking and harmful action should be unacceptable
  - Involvement of young people/peer to peer
  - Sustainability of actions
  - Need for comprehensive, strategic approaches
    - linked to overall strategy in country/region/local environment
    - linked to appropriate partners
  - No global solution in individual actions, but a combination of actions of different actors
- Specific need for Clearing House to:
  - Help partnerships develop
  - Broker specific advice
  - Share/disseminate good practice



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# Marketing Communication - Trends

- Trend:
  - 'Classic' advertising big, but stagnant or decreasing, new media much smaller, but growing (fast)
- Complex relation between marketing exposure and volume demand
- DG SANCO working hypothesis:
  - balance of evidence shows cumulative effect of marketing on young people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour
- Desire that advertising should be more responsible.
- Things slip through self regulation schemes.
- Public opinion/expectations: less exposure towards young people.



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# Marketing/communication - outcomes (I)

## 1. Self-Regulation :

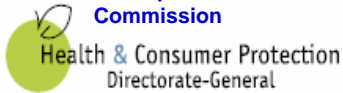
- Role of public authorities – challenge actors to cooperate
- target audiences to be on average older than the overall population, not younger!
- Principles of SR codes to extend all along the value chain
- EU-wide independent monitoring as to youth aspects of SR complementary to SROs' self-monitoring.
- Involve young people in adjudicating what is 'attractive'

## 2. Social Marketing:

- A potentially useful tool for positive education and harm reduction.



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# Marketing/communication - outcomes (II)

## 3. New media

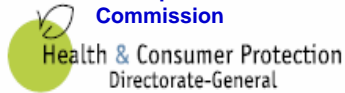
- Preserve principles of responsibility
- Open and participative process in developing/adjusting SR codes to new media
- How effective can gatekeeping be? - underage visits to new media sites

## 4. Specific follow up

- More work on social marketing
- Case studies and reporting/monitoring on SRs
- SR along value chain



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## Next steps

- **Implement the strategy**
  - Policy areas and levels (WHO, EU, national, local)
  - Partnerships and networks, innovative links
  - NGO role
- **Long-term objective:**
  - change attitudes towards irresponsible drinking across societies:
    - being drunk should no longer be socially acceptable  
*(similar to tobacco, where smoking seems to be less and less socially accepted)*