

Summary Day One  
Building Capacity for Action  
European Alcohol Policy Conference

Sally Casswell

- Harms
- Contextual issues
- Interventions
- Future prospects

# Harms

- Harm to others
  - Violence
  - Drinking driving
  - FAS, FASD
- Youth
  - Public disorder (leisure)
  - Social exclusion
  - Neurophysiological damage
- Older people
  - Cancer
  - Mental health
- Disadvantaged
  - Disproportionate harm (eg cirrhosis in Poland)
- Cirrhosis
- Costs
  - EU 2003 Euros 125 billion

# Contextual Issues

- Social Awareness
  - Alcohol seen as positive, good for health, by opinion leaders and people in general (WHO)
  - Only 5 -10% would say alcohol not good for health (Poland)
  - Little awareness re harm from alcohol (Spain)
  - Social awareness battle not won (Catalonia)
  - Momentum in public awareness but govt doesn't know what to do about it (DD)
  - Resistance can be broken down (Germany)
  - Scottish mood swing – govt in action!

# Contextual Issues (cont)

- Lack of parental involvement in what happens in young people's lives outside the home (Slovenia, Sweden)
- Role of vested interests
  - 'look for solutions without anyone being damaged' Viticulture; 'responsible drinking not good enough' (Spain)
  - 'have to contend with powerful enemies – marketing in the mass media more powerful than politicians' (Catalonia)
  - Economic and Social Committee (EU) drinks industry recommendations for change
  - 'If economic interests not involved would not tolerate such a situation of deaths' (WHO)
- Increased potency/size of alcohol drinks (UK)

# Need for Policy

- Economist's perspective – Market failure
- Can't rely on individual choice
  - Inadequate information on harms and addiction
  - External costs

# Cost Effective Interventions

- Taxation
- Ad ban
- Reduced Access
- RBT
- Brief advice
  
- Not education (NICE review)

# Taxation

- Low relative to tobacco (23% vs 44%)
- Price important re young (Sweden)
- Increasing affordability eg UK
- Minimum pricing
  - Apple juice law in Germany
- Estonia increased tax 30% -reduced sales
- Issue of cross border supply crucial (EC says is WHO role to engage MS in discussion re allowances; smuggling, tax stamps?)

# Advertising

- Estonia regulated recently
- Spain regulated re marketing
- Poland – reducing exposure via hours in parliament
- Germany – looking for a model to replace voluntary codes with regulation
- Scotland – advertising irresponsible – will change
- Sweden – has set young people and commercial communications as priority for 2009

- Reduced Access, RBT
  - Lack of enforcement
  - Drink driving penalties but not effective
- Brief intervention
  - Focus on PHC
- Education

# Future prospects

- National levels – momentum
- European Region
  - WHO ?
  - EC
    - Slovenia and Sweden (the tough guy) in 2009
    - European Alcohol and Health Forum WHO ?
- Global
  - Draft resolution for WHA
    - collaboration with industry
    - national focus
  - Tobacco comparison, need for a global legal framework