

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001457/24
to the Commission
Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)
(30 July 2024)**

Subject: Confronting alcohol consumption among young people

In a survey by the OECD (2019), more than one-third of young people in the EU reported ‘heavy drinking within the past month’.

Under-age alcohol consumption is associated with multiple risks to physical and mental health.

Acute intoxication can occur more easily among under-age drinkers, with the result that

- it creates problems in parts of the brain involved in balance, contributing to road accidents,
- it affects the nerves that control breathing and heart rate,
- it reduces body temperature, potentially leading to hypothermia,
- it inactivates the gagging reflex, increasing the risk of choking,
- it leads to suppression of breathing.

In addition to reckless behaviour in driving and sex (unwanted pregnancies, STDs), alcohol consumption among the under-25s, particularly below 15 years of age, leads to brain damage, impairing learning ability and memory among young people and causing problems in liver function.

It is noteworthy that 8% of Europeans report that they drink every day (Euronews, 2019), while the WHO estimates that alcohol causes nearly 1 million deaths annually in Europe.

1. As the Commission supports programmes to educate young people in dealing with alcohol consumption, does it have information on the results?
2. What action does the Commission plan to take in the five years 2024-2029 to prevent alcohol consumption among young people?
3. Are good practices available, so that municipalities can combat under-age drinking?

Submitted: 31.7.2024

**Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission
(19 September 2024)**

1. The Commission supports various programmes aimed at educating young people about risks related to alcohol. The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), conducted in 2019, indicated a decline in smoking and drinking among 15-16-year-old schoolchildren, although there were concerns about increased use of electronic cigarettes and of cannabis. ⁽¹⁾

These efforts are part of the broader EU Drugs Strategy ⁽²⁾ and Action Plan ⁽³⁾ 2021-2025, which prioritises prevention and awareness-raising on the effects of drugs, particularly among young people.

2. The Commission supports initiatives such as ESPAD and is currently evaluating the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025. However, until the new College of Commissioners is designated, the Commission cannot anticipate the work that will be done during the mandate 2024-2029.

The World Health Organisation and EU Evidence into Action Alcohol Project (EVID-ACTION) under the Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan aims to reduce alcohol-related harm through collaboration and support ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/european-school-survey-project-alcohol-and-other-drugs-and-eu-drugs-agency-publish-2019-report-2020-11-11_en

⁽²⁾ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021XG0324\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021XG0324(01))

⁽³⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2021_272_R_0002

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2023-8230-48002-71090>

3.The EU Action Plan on Youth Drinking and Heavy Episodic Drinking (Binge Drinking) 2014-2020 developed a comprehensive framework for local authorities to implement effective measures ⁽⁵⁾ in the fields of youth drinking and heavy episodic drinking.

The Health Promotion Knowledge Gateway provides examples of implemented policies and good practices addressing harm from alcohol consumption ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/action-plan-youth-drinking-and-heavy-episodic-drinking-binge-drinking-2014-2020-committee-national_en
⁽⁶⁾ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/health-promotion-knowledge-gateway/implemented-policies-addressing-harm-alcohol-consumption_en