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Excise duty on alcohol and alcoholic beverages – evaluation of excise duty rates and tax structures

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

This public consultation allows all relevant stakeholders to express their views on the current excise duty levels applied to alcohol. The current EU excise duty minimum rate definitions are being evaluated to assess whether they are still fit for purpose. Established in 1992, they have not been revised to take account of inflation or growing public health concerns.

Excise duties are indirect taxes on the sale or consumption of goods such as alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. The excise duty rules on these products are harmonised at the EU level to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market.

The EU taxation rules for alcohol and alcoholic beverages define and classify various product categories and lay down the relevant minimum tax rates (some products such as wine have a zero rate), as well as the conditions for the application of reduced rates. EU legislation only sets harmonised minimum rates; therefore, EU countries may apply excise duty rates above these minima, based on their national preferences.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

- Section 1 on respondent's profile and details;
- Section 2 on the overall demand and consumption of alcoholic products;
- Section 3 on the current policy framework.

The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete. Please note that you are not obliged to respond to all questions.

You can contribute to this consultation by filling in this online questionnaire. If you are unable, please contact us using the email TAXUD-UNIT-C2@ec.europa.eu. You can submit your responses in any official EU language, and you may upload additional documents.

Note: in this questionnaire, alcoholic beverages are classified in accordance with the terminology and definitions laid down in <u>Directive 92/83/EEC</u>.

About you

- *1 Language of my contribution
 - Bulgarian

	Danish
	Dutch
0	English
	Estonian
	Finnish
	French
	German
	Greek
	Hungarian
	Irish
	Italian
	Latvian
	Lithuanian
	Maltese
	Polish
	Portuguese
	Romanian
	Slovak
	Slovenian
	Spanish
	Swedish
l ar	n giving my contribution as
	Academic/research institution
0	Business association
	Company/business organisation
	Consumer organisation
_	EU citizen
0	Environmental organisation
0	Non-EU citizen
0	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
	Public authority
	Trade union

Croatian

Czech

*2

Other
*3 First name
Eunan
*4 Surname
McKinney
*5 Email (this won't be published)
eunan@alcoholactionireland.ie
*10 Please indicate whether your organisation has received financial support from
the alcohol industry in the past 5 year
Yes
No
*11 Organisation name
255 character(s) maximum
Alcohol Action Ireland
*12 Organisation size
Micro (1 to 9 employees)
Small (10 to 49 employees)
Medium (50 to 249 employees)
Large (250 or more)
13 Transparency register number
255 character(s) maximum
Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.
268106119036-39
*14 Country of origin
Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.
Afghanistan Djibouti Libya Saint Martin

	Åland Islands	0	Dominica	0	Liechtenstein		Saint Pierre and
							Miquelon
0	Albania	0	Dominican	0	Lithuania	0	Saint Vincent
			Republic				and the
							Grenadines
0	Algeria		Ecuador	0	Luxembourg	0	Samoa
	American Samoa		Egypt		Macau		San Marino
	Andorra		El Salvador		Madagascar		São Tomé and
							Príncipe
0	Angola	0	Equatorial Guinea	a [©]	Malawi	0	Saudi Arabia
	Anguilla		Eritrea		Malaysia		Senegal
0	Antarctica	0	Estonia	0	Maldives		Serbia
0	Antigua and		Eswatini		Mali		Seychelles
	Barbuda						
0	Argentina	0	Ethiopia	0	Malta		Sierra Leone
	Armenia		Falkland Islands		Marshall Islands		Singapore
0	Aruba	0	Faroe Islands	0	Martinique		Sint Maarten
0	Australia	0	Fiji	0	Mauritania		Slovakia
	Austria	0	Finland		Mauritius		Slovenia
	Azerbaijan	0	France		Mayotte		Solomon Islands
	Bahamas		French Guiana		Mexico		Somalia
	Bahrain		French Polynesia		Micronesia		South Africa
	Bangladesh		French Southern		Moldova		South Georgia
			and Antarctic				and the South
			Lands				Sandwich
							Islands
0	Barbados	0	Gabon	0	Monaco	0	South Korea
	Belarus		Georgia	0	Mongolia		South Sudan
0	Belgium	0	Germany	0	Montenegro	0	Spain
	Belize		Ghana		Montserrat		Sri Lanka
	Benin		Gibraltar		Morocco		Sudan
0	Bermuda		Greece		Mozambique		Suriname
0	Bhutan		Greenland	0	Myanmar/Burma		Svalbard and
							Jan Mayen
	Bolivia		Grenada		Namibia		Sweden

	Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba	©	Guadeloupe		Nauru		Switzerland
0	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	Guam	0	Nepal	0	Syria
0	Botswana	0	Guatemala	0	Netherlands	0	Taiwan
0	Bouvet Island		Guernsey		New Caledonia	0	Tajikistan
0	Brazil		Guinea	0	New Zealand	0	Tanzania
0	British Indian Ocean Territory	0	Guinea-Bissau	0	Nicaragua	0	Thailand
0	British Virgin Islands	0	Guyana		Niger	0	The Gambia
0	Brunei		Haiti		Nigeria	0	Timor-Leste
0	Bulgaria		Heard Island and		Niue	0	Togo
			McDonald Islands	3			
0	Burkina Faso		Honduras		Norfolk Island	0	Tokelau
0	Burundi		Hong Kong	0	Northern	0	Tonga
					Mariana Islands		
0	Cambodia		Hungary	0	North Korea	0	Trinidad and
							Tobago
0	Cameroon		Iceland	0	North Macedonia	0	Tunisia
0	Canada		India		Norway	0	Turkey
	Cape Verde		Indonesia		Oman	0	Turkmenistan
0	Cayman Islands		Iran		Pakistan	0	Turks and
							Caicos Islands
0	Central African		Iraq		Palau	0	Tuvalu
	Republic						
	Chad	0	Ireland		Palestine	0	Uganda
0	Chile		Isle of Man		Panama	0	Ukraine
0	China		Israel	0	Papua New	0	United Arab
					Guinea		Emirates
0	Christmas Island		Italy	0	Paraguay	0	United Kingdom
0	Clipperton		Jamaica		Peru	0	United States

0	Cocos (Keeling)	Japan	Philippines		United States
	Islands				Minor Outlying
					Islands
0	Colombia	Jersey	Pitcairn Islands		Uruguay
0	Comoros	Jordan	Poland		US Virgin Islands
0	Congo	Kazakhstan	Portugal		Uzbekistan
0	Cook Islands	Kenya	Puerto Rico		Vanuatu
0	Costa Rica	Kiribati	Qatar		Vatican City
0	Côte d'Ivoire	Kosovo	Réunion		Venezuela
0	Croatia	Kuwait	Romania		Vietnam
0	Cuba	Kyrgyzstan	Russia		Wallis and
					Futuna
0	Curaçao	Laos	Rwanda		Western Sahara
0	Cyprus	Latvia	Saint Barthélemy		Yemen
0	Czechia	Lebanon	Saint Helena		Zambia
			Ascension and		
			Tristan da Cunha	l	
0	Democratic	Lesotho	Saint Kitts and		Zimbabwe
	Republic of the		Nevis		
	Congo				
0	Denmark	Liberia	Saint Lucia		

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. Fo r the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published. Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

*16 Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

Anonymous

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

Public

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the personal data protection provisions

Overall demand and consumption of alcoholic beverages in your country

17 Based on your view of the price of alcoholic beverages on the market in your country, please select one of the options below.

- Alcohol is too cheap
- Alcohol is appropriately priced
- Alcohol is too expensive

18 In specific, how would you rate the price levels of the following products?

	Too expensive	A bit too expensive	At the correct level	A bit too cheap	Too cheap
Beer	0	0	0	0	•
Wine	0	0	0	0	•
Fermented beverages other than beer and wine (e.g. cider, perry etc.)	0	0	0	0	•
Ready-to-drink beverages (e.g. 'alcopops', 'hard seltzer' etc.)	0	0	0	0	•
Fortified wine (e.g. port, sherry etc.)	0	0	0	0	•
Spirits and liqueurs	0	0	0	0	•

19 In your view, to what extent do price levels influence consumers' overall consumption of alcohol?

To a very high extent

To a high extent

To a moderate extent

To a limited extent

20 In your view, which factors other than price, influence consumers' overall consumption of alcohol?

	Primary factor	Secondary factor	Not a relevant factor
Accessibility (shops, bars etc.)	•	0	©
Advertising	•	0	©
Lifestyle and sociability	0	•	0
Tradition and cultural habits	0	0	•

21 Other factors:

Not at all

Availability and placement - trading hours and density of both On and Off Trade outlets. Above and below the line marketing including loyalty scheme, bonus points and brand sponsorship of everyday cultural /sporting events. Additionally, a lack of awareness of the inherent risk from alcohol use to one physical and mental health sustains consumption.

22 In your view, to what extent do price levels influence consumers' choice in terms of the type of alcoholic beverages consumed?

- To a very high extent
- To a high extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a limited extent
- Not at all

23 Please indicate your view on taxing alcoholic beverages. Should taxes be

- Increased, substantially
- Increased, moderately
- Not sure
- No need to increase taxes

24 Please add any comments regarding the overall demand and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The OECD & WHO highlights that affordability of alcoholic beverages is a most important determinant of trends in alcohol harm. When alcohol becomes more affordable, harm increases. This means that alcohol taxation is a vital public health tool. EU alcohol tax policy has a substantial influence on member states' policy, both through regulation of taxation structures and recommended minimum levels. The EU should use this influence to provide greater protection of its citizens' health and wellbeing.

Evaluation of the current policy framework

25 Considering the market and alcoholic beverage consumption in your country, please indicate to what extent the following issues are problematic.

	Major problem	Moderate problem	Limited problem	Not a problem	Don' t know
Tax evasion linked to contraband and illegal production	0	0	•	0	0
Counterfeiting of branded products	0	0	0	•	0
'Cross-border shopping' – i.e., purchasing legal alcohol in other less-expensive countries	0	0	•	0	0
Local producers' difficulties to compete with large international players	©	0	0	•	0
Prevalence of poor quality of products on the market	0	0	0	•	0
Consumption of surrogate alcohol*	0	0	0	0	0
Health risks and social costs associated with alcohol consumption in the overall population	•	0	0	0	0
Health risks and social costs associated with alcohol consumption among young people	•	0	0	0	0
Health and societal burden associated with episodic heavy drinking	•	0	0	0	0

^{*} Alcohol not intended for human consumption

26 Other relevant problems:

The immeasurable cost to the EU economy and society of lost creativity, enterprise and human potential.

27 Please justify:

In any Member State, a cohort of its society is being knowingly abandoned as victims of alcohol use; casually handed up to commercial preferment.

28 What should be EU priorities in alcohol taxation?

	Very high	high	intermediate	low	Very low
To bring tax levels between countries closer to each other	0	0	•	0	0
Reduce the tax differentials between different types of products	0	•	0	0	0
Support the competitiveness of smaller operators	0	0	0	•	0
Adapt flexibly to the different Member States needs and priorities	0	0	0	•	0
Reduce the burden of the tax system on national authorities and market operators	0	0	0	0	•
Reduce the affordability of alcohol	•	0	0	0	0
Encourage product reformulation towards lower alcohol products	0	0	•	0	0
Help EU countries to curb illicit trade of alcoholic beverages and tax fraud	0	0	0	•	0

29 Other relevant goals:

Establish a harm levy on alcohol producers.

30 Please justify:

The revenues could fund alcohol awareness, harm and treatment programmes

31 Excise duties vary depending on the product categories (beer, wine, spirits etc.). How should tax levels be designed for different type of products?

Tax levels should (please express your agreement / disagreement)...

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Strongly disagree
reflect varying production costs across types of beverages	0	•	0	0	0
be proportionate to alcoholic beverage strength	•	0	0	0	0
be proportionate to the retail product prices	0	0	•	0	0

be designed to discourage the consumption of high-strength products	•	0	0	0	0
be designed to reduce the affordability of products which appeal to young people	0	•	0	0	0
not harm traditional / regional products	0	0	0	0	•

32 The EU rules require beer be taxed in proportion to its strength, but Member States may choose to measure beer strength with reference to either alcohol by volume (abv) or Plato degree. As a result, the EU minimum rates vary depending on the measurement system, especially for sweetened / flavoured beer.

The current EU minima for beer are EUR 1.87 per hectolitre / degree of alcohol or EUR 0.748 per hectolitre / point degree Plato.

Considering that Member States can set actual rates above the EU minima, please express your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a need to increase the EU minimum rate applied to beer	•	0	0	0	0
There is a need to consider establishing uniform taxation by abv across the EU	•	0	0	0	0
There is a need to correct the possible distortions caused by the application of the two different measurement systems	0	0	•	0	0

33 The EU minimum rate applied to wine is EUR 0, and the rate is expressed per volume of finished product.

Considering that Member States can set rates above the EU minima, please express your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a need to establish an EU minimum rate higher than 0 for wine	•	0	0	0	0
There is a need to apply excise duties on wine with reference to alcoholic strength (abv)	•	0	0	0	0

34 The EU minimum rate applied to fermented beverages other than wine and beer, such as cider, perry, mead, etc., is EUR 0, and the rate is expressed per volume of finished product.

Considering that Member States are free to set rates above the EU minima, please express your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a need to establish an EU minimum rate higher than 0 for these types of beverages	•	0	0	•	•
There is a need to apply excise duties on these types of beverages with reference to alcoholic strength (abv)	•	0	0	•	•

35 The EU minimum rate applied to 'intermediate products' (such as port, sherry and other fortified wines) is EUR 45 per hectolitre, and the rate is expressed per volume of finished product.

Considering that Member States can set rates above the EU minima, please express your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a need to increase the EU minimum rate applied to intermediate products	•	0	0	0	0
There is a need to apply excise duties on this type of beverages with reference to alcoholic strength (abv)	•	0	0	0	0

36 The EU minimum rates for 'ethyl alcohol' (mostly spirits and liqueurs) amount to EUR 550 per hectolitre of pure alcohol.

Considering that Member States can set rates above the EU minima, please express your agreement / disagreement with the following statement.

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a need to increase the EU minimum rate applied to ethyl alcohol	•	0	0	0	0

37 In the event of a hypothetical increase of the EU minimum rates applied to alcohol and alcoholic beverages, which aspects should policy-makers pay more attention to?

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Strongly disagree
The revision of minimum rates should ensure a level playing field among products	0	0	•	0	0

The revision of minimum rates should take into account differences in the purchasing power of consumers across the EU	0	•	0	0	•
The tax should represent a minimum level of the retail price	0	0	•	0	0
Mechanisms should be introduced for continuous tax level adjustment for inflation	•	0	0	0	0
The revision of minimum rates should preserve special regimes for specific regions / products	0	0	0	0	•
Minimum rates should increase gradually to avoid unintended market disruptions	0	0	0	0	•
The revision of minimum rates should foster price convergence between countries	0	0	•	0	0

39 What outcomes could be expected from a hypothetical increase in the average level of taxation applied to alcoholic products?

	Very likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very unlikely
The average consumption of alcohol per capita would decrease	0	•	0	0	0
The frequency of 'heavy episodic drinking' events would go down	0	•	0	0	0
There would be a shift in consumption towards the product categories which are less taxed	0	0	0	•	0
The market share of low-price products would increase	0	0	0	•	0
The consumption of illegal products would increase	0	0	0	•	0
The consumption of products purchased in another country would increase	0	0	0	•	0
Small local producers would be negatively affected compared to bigger companies	0	0	0	0	•
Tax revenues would increase	0	0	0	0	•
No substantial change	0	0	0	•	0

40 Other effects:

Alcohol harm would decrease due to lower levels of alcohol use and a reduction in heavy episodic drinking.

41 Please add any comments regarding the EU excise duty policy on alcohol and alcoholic beverages and possible revisions.

Priority should be given to ensure that all alcoholic beverages, regardless of their category, are taxed on their alcohol content, with higher strength products charged at higher rates because of the risk of greater harm.

The current EU structures hinder Member States from establishing effective excise taxes on several beverage types to reduce alcohol use and harm. The EU tax structure on wine is particularly poorly designed, which accounts for a large share of EU alcohol use.

It is, therefore, crucial that the tax structure for wine is revised.

The second priority should be to raise the minimum levels of tax overall, especially those on wine and fermented beverages. The EU undermines its own effort to reduce alcohol-related harm and to meet the targets it set itself in the Beating Cancer Plan by allowing zero excise rates.

Raising the minimum levels of excise tax on wine would be a progressive step for the EU to take on reaching its health targets. The EU must ensure minimum tax levels continue to deliver future health returns by indexing them to inflation.

42 You may upload here an additional document on the subject of this consultation, as additional background reading to better understand your position. The maximum file size is 1MB. The Commission will publish all additional documents received. *Please remove identifiers if you don't wish this information to be published.*

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

Contact

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