

Manifesto 2009 - 2014



The European Beer Consumers Union is a federation of 13 national beer consumer organisations across Europe, founded in 1990 with a combined membership of over 120,000 members which represents the interests and views of beer consumers across Europe.

The European Beer Consumers Union believes that beer – one of Europe's traditional drinks - is part of our heritage and deserves the support of the European Union.

Beer and Europe

Beer has been brewed in Europe for many thousands of years, it has formed an important part of the fabric of society and is a traditional drink across Europe. European Beer Consumers Union believes that there are several key issues that deserve to be addressed by the European Union.

Beer Consumption

Moderate consumption of alcohol has been shown to have health benefits.¹

Average alcohol consumption has been decreasing in the EU in recent years and the European Beer Consumers Union believes that the best way of tackling alcohol abuse is to target the minority who abuse alcohol.

Support for the Community Pubs and Bars

Community pubs and bars provide an important service to their local community, they are labour intensive, provide a social supervised environment and make a contribution to social cohesion.

“ There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.”

DR SAMUEL JOHNSON

¹ The effects of Moderate Beer Consumption A digest of the current scientific literature 4th edition Brewers of Europe 2008 COM(2006)625

Equal Treatment for Beer vs Wine

Beer is as much an agricultural product as wine, but is treated as an industrial product by the European Union. As a result brewers and beer drinkers are perceived to get unequal treatment in many member states of the European Union. This must change.

Very large sums are devoted to support the wine industry. In 2009 the total Budget for this support across the European Union via 18 member states amounted to €1,500,000,000 and this figure is scheduled to rise over subsequent years.

Hop growers, barley growers and maltsters and brewers should be able to receive similar support via a similar programme to market and promote beer.

The place of Beer in the European Union

Beer is the natural and national drink of many member states in the EU. It should receive equal prominence at the EU level. All official Commission functions and Parliamentary occasions should serve beer from the relevant breweries alongside other drinks such as wine.



Environmental Issues

The European Brewers have in recent years reduced their carbon footprint enormously and have initiated many green measures.

EBCU supports the use of returnable bottles, an increase in recycling and the reduction in landfill use by beer producers, retailers and consumers.

And what can the European Union do?

In order to preserve and promote a sensible approach to the consumption of beer across Europe, European Beer Consumers Union has identified several key issues. We would ask for your support on these issues to help preserve and promote Europe's Beer and brewing heritage, support well run pubs and bars and protect beer consumers' rights.

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Prevent alcohol abuse

The European Union should review its strategy to reduce alcohol related harm with a view to:

- encouraging the consumption of alcohol within pubs and bars where price, peer pressure and supervision by trained staff reduces the risk of alcohol misuse
- supporting education initiatives which highlight the positive as well as negative aspects of alcohol consumption. Research clearly shows that moderate alcohol consumption can bring health benefits and the experience of socialising in pubs and bars can boost an individual's happiness and feeling of well being
- focus on education, treatment and support for the small minority who abuse alcohol and act irresponsibly.

A structured and sensible approach to Beer taxation

The European Union should proceed with plans to allow Member States to introduce lower VAT on meals sold in pubs and bars. These plans should also be extended to allow lower VAT rates on beer sold and consumed in pubs and bars.



The European Union should retain the Small Breweries Relief scheme which allows Member States to reduce the beer excise duty charge to small brewers by up to 50%. Currently 18 Member States have a system of reduced beer excise duty for small brewers allowing them to compete with large multinational brewers.

The European Union should take action to compel high beer excise duty Member States to reduce their duty rates to prevent the distortion of cross border trade.

The European Union should aim to ensure that taxation of beer is reasonable compared to other drinks.

The European Union should allow Member States the option of charging a lower rate of beer excise duty on draught beer sold and consumed within licensed premises.

Beer – a natural agricultural product

The European Union should provide the malting barley and hop growers with the same level of financial support received by the wine vineyards.



Information for the consumer

The European Union should remove the exemption that allows alcoholic drinks producers to avoid listing ingredients. The European Union should ensure that consumers are given sufficient information to make an informed choice of what they drink. The European Union should legislate so that the actual place of brewing is stated on beer labels and not just the beer brand name to enable consumers to be able to choose a genuine locally or regionally produced beer.

A greener brewing industry

The European Union should provide financial assistance to small and medium sized brewers to enable them to become more energy efficient.

Alcohol Monopolies

The European Union should act against those State alcohol monopolies that restrict beer consumers freedom of choice.

Brewing facts and figures

- Beer has been brewed in Europe for over 3,000 years
- Number of breweries in the EU is over 3,000
- EU Brewers produce 416m hectolitres of beer annually
- The production, and retailing of beer employs over 750,000 across the EU
- The beer and brewing contributes € 57,500,000,000 to the European Economy annually ²
- Member States receive at least € 39,000,000,000 a year in tax revenues
- 50% of the world's hops are produced in Europe.

² "The Contribution made by Beer to the European Economy" Ernst & Young 2006

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Further information about the beer and brewing scene in a particular country can be obtained from the local national beer consumer organisation, details below.

“From man’s sweat and God’s love,
beer came into the world”

ST ARNOLD OF METZ, PATRON SAINT OF BREWERS

The Member Organisations of EBCU

Austria : BierIG

www.bierig.org

Belgium : Zythos

www.zythos.be

Czech Republic : Sdruzeni Prátel Piva

www.pratelepora.cz

Denmark : Danske Ølentusiaster

www.ae.dk

Finland : Olutliitto

www.olutliitto.fi

France : ATPUB

www.atpub.org

Italy : Unionbirrai

www.unionbirrai.com

The Netherlands : PINT

www.pint.nl

Norway : NORØL

www.nor-ale.org

Poland : Bractwo Piwne

www.bractwopiwnie.pl

Sweden : Svenska Ölfrämjandet

www.svenskaolframjandet.se

Switzerland : Association des Buveurs d’Orges

www.abo-ch.org

United Kingdom : CAMRA

www.camra.org.uk

“He was a wise man who invented beer”

PLATO

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