BBPA comments on NGO's decision to leave European Alcohol and Health Forum

Wednesday 3 June, 2015

Commenting on the decision of several NGOs to leave the European Alcohol and Health Forum, Brigid Simmonds, BBPA Chief Executive, said:

"I am disappointed that several NGOs have taken this decision. The BBPA is a member of the Forum, and we firmly believe that the partnership approach works well and is a good mechanism for tackling alcohol harm, at both the EU and UK levels.

"We have had two commitments under the Forum, the Challenge 21 campaign which has played a key part in the reduction of sales to underage consumers and also our current commitment on 'Alcohol Unit Awareness' in pubs which is helping to provide consumers with better information about the unit content of what they drink.'

"Through similar work in the UK, via the Government's Responsibility Deal, we have achieved considerable success to date, meeting the billion unit reduction pledge by increasing availability of lower-strength beers and ensuring that over 80 per cent of beer products on shelf have health information on unit content, a pregnancy warning and the Chief Medical Officer's guidance on lower risk consumption."

"It is positive that in the UK, key indicators show a reduction in alcohol related harms and I hope in future, these organisations will decide to return and continue to work collaboratively to tackle alcohol misuse across Europe."

Notes to editors:

Please also see comments below from the Brewers of Europe.

• The Brewers of Europe regrets the decision by a number of NGOs to abandon the European Alcohol and Health Forum, which was created by the EU Strategy in 2007 "to provide a common platform for all

interested stakeholders at EU level that pledge to step up actions relevant to reducing alcohol-related harm"
• We hope that this is merely a temporary solution and that the Commission is able to convince these NGOs of the EU's ongoing commitment to tackling alcohol misuse and reducing the harm that this causes.

• Both the European Parliament and EU Member States recently recognised the positive contribution made by the EU Strategy and the continuing relevance both of the priority areas for action and of the structures set up to implement it, such as the Forum

• Brewers remain committed to rolling out, theough our European Beer Pledge, actions, including through partnerships with government authorities and NGOs, that concretely address alcohol-related harm at the local level, brewers already being responsible for over a third of the commitments to action made in the Forum.

• We also recently announced a commitment to roll-out ingredients listing and the provision of nutrition information for beer across the European Union, a commitment that was welcomed by the European Commission, by MEPs and also by NGOs.

The British Beer & Pub Association is the leading body representing Britain's brewers and pub companies. The Association is more than a century old and was originally founded as the Brewers' Society in 1904. Our members account for some 90 per cent of beer brewed in Britain today, and own around 20,000 of the nation's pubs.

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