



The European FASD Alliance  
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08 June, 2015

Dear Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Dr. Andriukaitis,

The European Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Alliance is deeply disappointed in the Commission's lack of support for a new and stronger European Strategy to Reduce Alcohol-related Harm. The decision to manage alcohol as a general health problem will not be effective to protect our unborn children from exposure to drinking. We urge you to honor the democratic process as expressed by the vote of the European Parliament in favor of a new Strategy. Action is urgently needed to protect our unborn children, as recent active-case ascertainment studies in Europe show that 2% of our newborns may have some degree of cognitive damage due to prenatal exposure.<sup>1,2</sup> While public health in the EU is clearly a matter for individual states, the EU must act in cases of supranational interests. Clearly, alcohol marketing and commerce in the EU go far beyond national interests—in fact the EU has repeatedly assumed the right to intervene in proposed national measures to limit alcohol consumption, for example, in the current EU discussion on Minimum Unit Pricing in Scotland. Harmonization of labelling is urgently needed for alcoholic products, just as for all other foodstuffs across Europe. Women across Europe have the right to know that they should avoid alcohol in pregnancy.

We therefore ask you to use the means available to the European Commission to protect the unborn child by developing a common strategy to prevent prenatal exposure, including mandatory warning labels on drinks containers and on all forms of advertisement for alcoholic

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<sup>1</sup> May, PA et al. Epidemiology of FASD in a province in Italy: Prevalence and characteristics of children in a random sample of schools. *Alcohol Clin. Exp. Res.* 30, 1562-1575 (2006).

<sup>2</sup> Petković G, Barišić I. Prevalence of fetal alcohol syndrome and maternal characteristics in a sample of schoolchildren from a rural province of Croatia. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 10(4):1547-61 (2013).

drinks. We remain at your disposal for further information on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and prevention thereof.

With sincere regards,

Diane Black, Ph.D., Chair, European FASD Alliance

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