



PRESS RELEASE

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Alcohol is more than ever a European public health problem

Active warmly welcomes the Swedish EU Presidency today and wishes good luck, persistence and maximum successes for the upcoming 6 months!

"We are thrilled to see the comprehensive, well-balanced and bold agenda of the Swedish Presidency for the coming half year," says Active's Secretary General Kristina Sperkova. "As a European youth organization we are especially happy and thankful for the Swedish efforts to put alcohol on the agenda. To improve society, we need a Europe-wide restrictive alcohol policy."

Europe is the region with the highest alcohol consumption in the world. Worldwide alcohol accounts for one in 25 death cases and for 5% of all diseases. Some of the diseases are directly caused by alcohol and would not occur without it. Some other diseases are increased by alcohol consumption. In Europe the costs that alcohol burdens society with every year are as high as 125 Billion Euro. Active is especially concerned about this number because the group affected strongest by the alcohol burden are the children and young people - Europe's future.

In the face of these facts we once more want to express our support for the Swedish Presidency. Higher import quotas to protect the restrictive alcohol policies; a strong effort to provide safe environments for the young members of society; and a clear signal against the paramount lobby activities of the alcohol industry that does not take public health into consideration - are Active's policy demands.

We need community action to tackle the alcohol burden. "In this sense Active members hope that the Swedish effort will have the effect that many more member states start seriously working on alcohol problems. Active and its member organizations will be ready to contribute," says Kristina Sperkova.

For further information:

Kristina Sperkova, Sec.General

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"Active- sobriety, friendship and peace" is a non - governmental organisation gathering European youth organisations working for peace and solidarity, promoting a lifestyle free from alcohol and other drugs. We have more than 25 000 members - 25 000 young Europeans who do not drink alcohol in any amount.