



Testing self-regulation of alcohol advertising in Europe

To appeal or not to appeal

Results of monitoring alcohol marketing in Europe in 2010

To appeal or not to appeal

Testing self-regulation of alcohol advertising

- *Complaints against the content of alcohol advertising in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands*
- *Decisions of the national Advertising Code Committees of the self-regulation system about these complaints compared with opinions of national Youth Panels*

The report 'To appeal or not to appeal' is one of the deliverables of the AMMIE project (Alcohol Marketing Monitoring in Europe), undertaken from July 2009 until August 2011.

The AMMIE project is co-funded by the European Commission and coordinated by the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy (STAP)

Partners of STAP in the AMMIE project are:

- Danish Alcohol Policy Network / Alkoholpolitisk Landsraad, Denmark
- German Centre for Addiction Issues (DHS), Germany
- Foundation 'Horizonti 21', Bulgaria
- Eurocare Italia, Italy
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Summer 2011



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1. Introduction

1.1. Alcohol Marketing Monitoring in Europe (AMMIE)

The report 'To appeal or not to appeal' is a result of the AMMIE project that aims to provide insight into the functioning of existing regulations on alcohol advertising in a number of countries in Europe. It also aims to answer the question whether alcohol advertisers adhere to the rules. This is done by the systematic monitoring of alcohol advertising in 2010 by five NGO's in five countries: Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands. To monitor alcohol advertising, AMMIE makes use of the extensive experience gained in the Netherlands. This form of monitoring is conducted in the Netherlands since 2002 by the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy (STAP), commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Much of the regulation of alcohol advertising has been created and is enforced by the alcohol industry itself and is therefore called self-regulation. In practice, most evaluations of these regulations are done exclusively by commercial parties and are therefore not independent. In 2010, the five NGO's selected 84 alcohol marketing practices that seemed to be in violation with the existing national rules for self-regulation. The next step was to file complaints against these practices with the national Alcohol Advertising Committees, who are to decide whether these complaints were upheld or not.

The following step in the project was to ask the five Youth Rating Panels from the five participating countries to give their opinions about a selection of the complaints. One of the questions was: *Do you think these advertisements are attractive to your peers?* The answers on these and other questions about these ads were compared with the decisions of the Advertising Code Committees.

This report presents a collective overview of the results of these procedures and an overview of the project results of the five participating countries. An even more detailed description can be found in the five separate national reports published by the five NGO's that participated in the AMMIE project: Foundation 'Horizonti 21', Bulgaria; Danish Alcohol Policy Network / Alkoholpolitisk Landsraad, Denmark; German Centre for Addiction Issues (DHS), Germany; Eurocare Italia, Italy; Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy, The Netherlands.

1.2. Alcohol, young people and alcohol marketing

Alcohol consumption by children and adolescents in Europe is high, which takes victims and causes much social damage. In recent years, there has been an increase among adolescents in earlier initiation and binge drinking in most EU Member States. The magnitude of alcohol advertising is one of the factors that contribute to adolescents drinking very early. Also, young people who already drink alcohol tend to drink more frequently and consume larger amounts of alcohol after being exposed to alcohol (Anderson et al., 2009). Also exposure to alcohol advertising can directly, for example while watching television, lead to consuming more alcohol (Engels et al., 2009).

The impact of alcohol advertising on drinking behaviour of young people relates to two elements: The content of advertising (with the critical key question: *is the content of alcohol advertising not too attractive for young people?*) and the volume of alcohol advertising (with the critical key question: *are young people not too much and too often exposed to alcohol advertising?*).

This report focuses particularly on the content of alcohol advertising. In 2010, complaints about the content of alcohol advertisements have been filed in five different countries. The committees that have to evaluate these complaints took a decision about these advertisements. Consequently they decide to accept the complaint or reject it. Then, young people have been asked about their views on a number of these same advertisements and by doing this they evaluated the decision of the committees from their point of view. This report reflects the outcome of that comparative research.

1.3. The regulation of alcohol advertising in Europe

To prevent that young people being exposed to attractive alcohol advertising, there are regulations that determine with which rules the content of advertising must comply. For example, in 2001, the European Commission issued a recommendation (Council Recommendation, 2001) for its Member States, in particular to ensure that the content of alcohol marketing is not attractive to young people. In many countries, these recommendations may or may be partially reflected in non-statutory voluntary regulations. The content of these rules is established and enforced by producers and advertisers of alcoholic beverages; this is called self-regulation.

Council Recommendation (2001)

This Recommendation contains a number of factors related to the regulation of alcohol marketing that is recommended to the Member States.

The recommendation called for the States where necessary to:

- a. Encourage, in cooperation with the producers and the retailers of alcoholic beverages and relevant non-governmental organisations, the establishment of effective mechanisms in the fields of promotion, marketing and retailing;
- b. To ensure that producers do not produce alcoholic beverages specifically targeted at children and adolescents;
- c. To ensure that alcoholic beverages are not designed or promoted to appeal to children and adolescents and paying particular attention inter alia, to the following elements:

-
- the use of styles (such as characters, motifs or colours) associated with youth culture,
 - featuring children, adolescents, or other young (looking) models, in promotion campaigns,
 - allusions to, or images associated with, the consumption of drugs and of other harmful substances, such as tobacco,
 - links with violence or antisocial behaviour,
 - implications of social, sexual or sporting success,
 - encouragement of children and adolescents to drink, including low-price selling to adolescents of alcoholic drinks,

-
- advertising during, or sponsorship of, sporting, musical or other special events which a significant number of children and adolescents attend as actors or spectators,
 - advertising in media targeted at children and adolescents or reaching a significant number of children and adolescents,
 - free distribution of alcoholic drinks to children and adolescents, as well as sale or free distribution of products which are used to promote alcoholic drinks and which may appeal in particular to children and adolescents;
-

Source: Council Recommendation of 5 June 2001 on the drinking of alcohol by young people, in particular children and adolescents (2001/458/EC) C.F. R (2001)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:161:0038:0041:EN:PDF>

There is also a European Directive, the AVMSD, which in terms of content has some rules on the content of advertising on radio, TV and online TV resembling the recommendations of the Council Recommendation (2001).

Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD): Article 15 about alcohol marketing (2007)

Television advertising and teleshopping for alcoholic beverages shall comply with the following criteria:

- (a) it may not be aimed specifically at minors or, in particular, depict minors consuming these beverages;
- (b) it shall not link the consumption of alcohol to enhanced physical performance or to driving;
- (c) it shall not create the impression that the consumption of alcohol contributes towards social or sexual success;
- (d) it shall not claim that alcohol has therapeutic qualities or that it is a stimulant, a sedative or a means of resolving personal conflicts;
- (e) it shall not encourage immoderate consumption of alcohol or present abstinence or moderation in a negative light;
- (f) it shall not place emphasis on high alcoholic content as being a positive quality of the beverages.

Source: European Parliament and the Council; Audio Visual Media Service Directive, 2010/13/EU (2010)

Additionally, many countries have rules that aim to reduce the amount of alcohol advertisements. These rules, for example a ban on TV advertising at times when many young people are watching, are almost without exception embedded in law.

1.4. What is self-regulation of alcohol advertising?

According to the Dutch Advertising Code Foundation (ACF), self-regulation aims to avoid regulatory requirements and to maintain the freedom to create advertising (Advertising Code Foundation, 2011a). The alternative to self-regulation is statutory regulation. In practice, almost all European countries

have, regarding alcohol advertising, a combination of statutory regulation and self-regulation. Statutory regulations especially cover a certain reduction of the amount of alcohol advertising, for example in the form of a time ban (like no alcohol advertising on radio and television between 6 AM and 9 PM) or in the form of a product restriction (no TV advertising for spirits). Self-regulation only has a few types of volume restrictions (for example, the rule that no more than 25% of the audience group may consist of minors) and consists mainly of rules for the limitations of the content of alcohol advertising (STAP, ELSA-project 2007 (www.elsa-europe.org); STAP FASE-project 2010 (www.FASEproject.eu)). Several scientific studies suggest that self-regulation is not sufficiently effective with respect to the need to protect young people to the influence of alcohol advertising (Vendrame & Pinsky, 2010).

1.5. Regulations on the content of alcohol advertising assessed by five national Advertising Code Committees and by young people

This report is the result of a review of existing regulations of the content of alcohol advertisements in five Member States of the European Union. Almost without exception, they show strong resemblance with the Council Recommendation (EC, 2001). Implicitly, with this evaluation the effectiveness of the Council Recommendation could be assessed.

The review of existing self-regulation and some statutory codes is a part of the AMMIE project and is conducted by the five project partners: in 2010, alcohol advertising was systematically inventoried in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands in a comparable way.

If there was the impression that the advertisement was found to be attractive to young people (or for other reasons appeared to be in conflict with the rules for self-regulation) project partners filed complaints with the national Advertising Code Committee. These committees then determined whether the advertisement in question was in breach with the existing national regulations. As mentioned earlier, this mainly refers to the rules within the system of self-regulation. Also, the project partners filed complaints to the code committees for other reasons. Over time, the project partners received, in written form, the decision of the Advertising Code Committees: the complaints were accepted, rejected or in some cases inadmissible. This decision, then, was accompanied by an argumentation.

In practice, the complaint procedure is ceased after a committee has made a decision and no appeal is made. When a complaint is accepted, in some cases a warning or a recommendation addressed to the advertiser follows. Rarely there is a penalty (e.g. a fine) imposed.

However, as part of the project, this proceeding has been given a follow-up: a total of 150 young people aged 13-17 years (average 30 per country) using an online rating system has also been asked their opinions on specific alcohol advertisements. They could, for example, decide whether the challenged advertising was attractive to their peers or that the advertisement gave the suggestion that drinking alcohol leads to social, sexual or sporting success.

In the AMMIE project, the decisions of the Advertising Code Committees on a specific advertisement were compared with the views of young people on these commercials. This report is the result of that comparison.

The methodology within the AMMIE project responds to a recommendation found/included in the report "Effective Alcohol Marketing Regulations; a Proposed Framework to Evaluate Existing Alcohol Marketing Regulations (de Bruijn, Johansson, & van den Broeck, 2010). The recommendation states that 'Alcohol advertisements should be evaluated according to young people's interpretation and not according to the intention of the advertiser'.

The project partners from respectively Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, have used the method described in detail in their national complaint reports. We kindly refer to these reports for a detailed explanation of their methodology, as this report merely aims to summarize their work.

1.6. The 5 national AMMIE reports

The national reports in which more detailed country information could be found are:

- Complaints on alcohol marketing; Report on complaints and the complaint system in Bulgaria; AMMIE project; Foundation 'Horizonti 21'; Sofia; 2011.
- Complaints on alcohol marketing; Report on complaints and the complaint system in Denmark; AMMIE project; Danish Alcohol Policy Network/ Alkoholpolitisk Landsraad; Copenhagen; 2011.
- Complaints on alcohol marketing; Report on complaints and the complaint system in Germany; AMMIE project; German Centre for Addiction Issues (DHS); Hamm; 2011.
- Complaints on alcohol marketing; Report on complaints and the complaint system in Italy; AMMIE project; Eurocare Italia; Padova; 2011.
- Complaints on alcohol marketing; Report on complaints and the complaint system in the Netherlands; AMMIE; Dutch Institute for Alcohol Marketing; Utrecht 2011.

These complaint reports can be found on www.eucam.info/eucam/home/ammie-complaints.html.

Other AMMIE reports can be found on www.eucam.info/eucam/home/ammie.html.

In Italy, the complaining system contemplates the possibility to file complaints to both the Self-Regulation Committee and to the National Authority for Commercial Communication (AGCM), which is an independent institution taking its decisions based on the law. The task of AGCM is protecting consumers from unfair commercial practices and misleading advertising.

This report only covers the complaints filed in the five countries presented to the Advertising Code Committee of the self-regulation system. In the national Italian report of Eurocare Italia, the description of all the complaints directed to the two committees can be found.

2. Results of complaint procedures and ratings of the Youth Panels

2.1. Number of complaints in the five participating countries, the decisions of national Advertising Code Committees, and the views of youth rating panels

In 2010, the partners of the AMMIE project collected alcohol advertisements which they expected to be in breach with existing regulations. In particular, attention was paid to whether these advertisements were possibly attractive to young people (1), suggesting that there was encouragement of excessive alcohol consumption (2) or the suggestion of social, sexual or sporting success due to alcohol use (3).

In almost all cases, complaints were filed with the Advertising Code Committees of national self-regulatory organizations. The following list shows how many complaints these five organizations have submitted, and shows the decision of the Advertising Code Committees.

The following section provides a summary of the number of complaints per country including the decisions of the National Advertising Code Committees (Table 1). Table 1 shows these complaints classified by content.

The third table displays the extent to which the decision of the Advertising Code Committees differs from that of the Youth Panels. In 2010, the Youth Rating Panels were asked -in four rounds- to give their opinion and to evaluate about 109 complaints on alcohol advertising practices. In Denmark, 40 youngsters participated, in Germany 30, and in the Netherlands 37.

In Italy, 57 young people were included in the first round, whereas the last group consisted of only 22 young people. In Bulgaria, 29 people took part in the first round, and in the fourth round 21 youngsters took part. Altogether, 199 young people participated in one or more rounds, 150 youths have participated in all rounds, which means an average of 30 young people per country. These young people were 12-18 years of age.

Note: Two or more complaints (and sub-complaints) may be filed about one alcohol advertising practice. For example, one advertisement can both be attractive for young people as well as suggesting excessive drinking.

Table 1: Number of complaints filed, sorted by country and decision of the Advertising Code Committee

Country	Number of advertisements to be challenged	Number of (sub) complaints	Not Upheld	Upheld	No decision yet
Bulgaria	10	42	28	14	--
Denmark	17	35	23	9	3
Germany	15	35	29	6	-
Italy	26	38	20	11	7
Netherlands	16	49	44	5	-
Total	84	199 (100%)	142 (71%)	47 (24%)	10 (5%)

Result: About 84 advertisements, a total of 199 (sub) complaints have been filed. On average, this means nearly 17 advertisements per country and almost 40 (sub) complaints. This means that the partners were of the opinion that there were 199 instances of a violation of an article of the self-regulatory code. A total of 142 complaints have been rejected (71% of the total), 47 complaints were upheld (24%) and 10 complaints are still awaiting a decision (5%).

Note: As above mentioned, only in Italy a substantial number of complaints 22 were filed with the Advertising Code Commission of the government (National Authority for Commercial Communications (AGCM)). No decision was taken (yet) on 7 complaints, and other complaints were dismissed. More details can be found in the Italian Country Report (Eurocare Italia 2011). In this report, the decisions of the AGCM were not included because there is no comparison with other countries available.

Table 2: Theme, number, and decisions regarding complaints on alcohol advertising in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands

Theme of the complaint	Number of advertising practices	Number of (sub) complaints	Not upheld	Upheld	No decision yet
Attractive to youth		47	38	5	4
Stimulating excessive alcohol use		27	17	8	2
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success		76	52	22	2
Other		49	35	12	2
Total	84	199	144	45	10

Result: 199 (sub) complaints had as content: attractiveness to youth (47, 24%), encourage excessive alcohol consumption (27, 13%), suggestion of social, sexual or athletic success due to alcohol consumption (76, 38%). The remaining 49 (25%) were other types of complaints (see country reports).

Table 3: Rejected complaints: decisions Advertising Code Committees sorted by theme compared with opinion of the Youth Panels in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (2010)

Theme of complaint	Number of rejected (sub) complaints by Committee (not upheld)	View Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View Youth Panel is similar to that of the Committee
Attractive to youth	28	27	1
Stimulating excessive alcohol use	11	6	5
Suggests social, sexual or athletic success	31	24	7
Total	70	57	13

Table 4: Accepted complaints: decisions Advertising Code Committee sorted by theme compared with opinions of the Youth Panels in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (2010)

Theme of complaint	Number of (sub) complaints upheld by Committee	View Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View Youth Panel is similar to that of the Committee
Attractive to youth	5		5
Stimulating excessive alcohol use	7	4	3
Suggests social, sexual or athletic success	7	2	5
Total	19	6	13

Result: Of the 199 complaints about which the Advertising Code Committees have made decisions, 89 (45%) have been submitted to the Youth Panel.

Note: In practice, a total of 109 complaints have been submitted to the Youth Panel. In Table 4, only the 89 complaints about the most relevant themes for young people have been included. Complaints about health claims, estimated ages of actors etc. are not included. The results of all the 109 complaints can be found in the 5 country reports.

The result is remarkable: In total, the Commission rejected 70 of the 88 complaints. With regard to these 70 rejections, young people disagreed with the Standards Code Committee 57 times (82%). The greatest contrast in views was on whether the advertisement was attractive to young people. In almost all cases, the young people's opinion on the issue of the attractiveness of the advertisement differed from the decision of the Advertising Code Committee to reject complaints (27 of the 28 cases).

With the other complaints (presumed encouragement excessive alcohol consumption and the assumption of a link between alcohol consumption and social, sexual or athletic success) young people 30 times disagreed with the Committee (when complaints were rejected), and they agreed 12 times. In those cases where the Code Committee upholds complaints, young people agree with the Committee 13 times and disagree 6 times.

Note 1: The results of all these individual assessments and their related arguments are described in detail in the country reports.

Note 2: As to whether or not an advertisement is appealing to young people, the youngsters answered the question: do you think this advertising is appealing to your peers? The Advertising Code Committees had, according to the text of the article in advertising code, answered the question whether or not such advertisement was aimed specifically at young people.

These methods of assessment are not exactly the same. According to the AMMIE partners, this is not a fundamentally different assessment. The essence is that if young people feel attracted by an advertisement, and the Committees see no reason to uphold the complaint, there are actually two opposing views.

2.2. Summary of conclusions from the country reports on the evaluation of the ads

In their national reports, the partners from the five participating countries have reported extensively on their findings on the filing of complaints and assessment of the advertising by youth rating panels. A summary:

Bulgaria:

Characteristics of advertising content that is attractive to young people are humour, music, story, human characters (cartoons), animal characters, and special effects or animations.

These characteristics are often found in the current range of alcohol advertising.

Denmark:

Humour was a significant factor for the youngsters in liking an ad. Humour is boosting the effect of an ad, but it is not part of the Danish regulation. Moreover, the Committee perceives humour as a mitigating feature for an ad, and not as a reinforcing feature.

Germany:

The rules of the Code of Conduct on Commercial Communication for Alcoholic Beverages are that superficial and patchy that the advertising companies can easily circumvent the self-commitments of the German Advertising Standards Council. Common justifications for a refusal on the part of the committee have been: 'an advertisement was not only appealing to youngsters but also to adults and can therefore not be misconstrued as targeting minors'.

Italy:

The use of cartoons is very attractive for youngsters, even if the Committees answer that it is not specific a youth culture cartoon; in many cases, youngsters notice that other elements of the ads (sex, irony, originality) are more visible than the product itself, and these elements are used to make the message more attractive; youngsters are conscious that a message about the low alcohol content and the benefits of alcohol beverages on health is misleading. When sex is too explicit, it is not very attractive; youngsters consider attractive a message about seduction or social situations that bring out sexuality; depicting minors and/or young people consuming alcohol is still attractive for the sample, although the difference between attractive – non attractive is not significant; ads that show people drinking in social contexts or parties get high scores in terms of attractiveness.

The Netherlands:

Especially the articles with regard to the protection of minors are often 'interpreted too literally'. In practice, alcohol advertisements might not be *specifically* targeting *minors*, but a wider audience, including adults. However, the Youth Rating Panel has clearly shown that, although the advertising might not be specifically targeted at them, it is still appealing to them.

So basically, the Committee can hardly be 'blamed' for denying most of the complaints, because they literally adhere to the Code.

Concerning the code about social and sexual success, it is literally stated that advertising for alcoholic beverages shall not make the impression that there is a causal link between the consumption of alcoholic beverages and social or sexual success. Despite the fact that no causal relation is evoked or shown in alcohol advertising, often an obvious association is made between drinking an alcoholic beverage and social or sexual success.

3. Why is it necessary to test the self-regulation system?

3.1. Alcohol use among European youngsters is a great concern

Europe is the world's heaviest drinking region (WHO, 2011) In recent years there has been an increase among adolescents in earlier initiation and binge drinking in most EU Member States. Among 15- and 16- year-olds, one in six have been binge drinking during the previous month, and one in eight have been drunk more than 20 times in their life. Alcohol is the third leading factor for illness/bad health and death in Europe and 55 million Europeans exhibit dangerous drinking habits/behaviour. In Europe, approximately 25% of all male and 11% of all female deaths between 15 and 29 years old are caused by alcohol (4). The estimated total economic costs of the use of alcohol in the EU were €125bn in 2003 (1.3% GDP) (Anderson, 2006).

3.2. Both the volume and content of alcohol advertising has to be regulated

Research shows that young people who have been regularly exposed to alcohol advertising start drinking earlier or drink more when they already drink, than those who have been less exposed to alcohol advertising (Anderson et al., 2009).

The influence of alcohol advertising on the drinking behaviour of adolescents is unmistakable. Scientific studies show that exposure to alcohol advertising is significantly related to more positive beliefs about alcohol use, which in turn are associated with greater future intentions among children and adolescents to drink alcohol. Exposure to alcohol marketing that young people perceive as appealing increases adolescents' intention to consume alcohol, and affects the actual drinking behaviour of youngsters (Casswell & Zhang, 1998, Gentile et al., 2001; Chen, et al., 2005).

A review of 13 longitudinal studies, wherein the same youngsters were followed during a period of 8 to 96 months, consistently suggests that exposure to media and commercial communications about alcohol is associated with the likelihood that adolescents will start drinking alcohol, and with increased drinking amongst baseline drinkers (Anderson et al., 2009).

The proven relation between advertising and drinking behaviour makes it necessary to regulate effectively the content as well as the volume of alcohol advertising young people are confronted with.

This report only deals with the evaluation of the self-regulation of the content of alcohol advertising.

We already quoted the following statement about the content of alcohol advertisements:

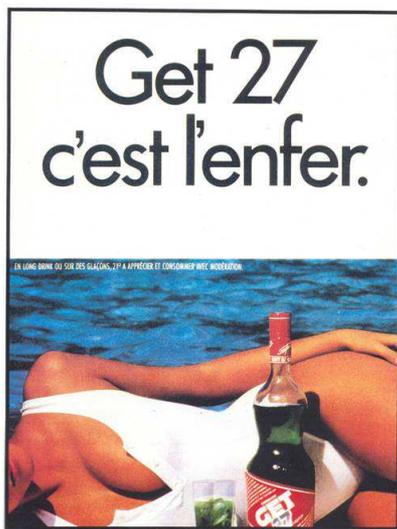
To be effective, content restrictions should satisfy the following criteria (STAP, FASE report, 2010):

- Content restrictions should address all elements that have shown to be appealing to young people (e.g. lifestyle images, humour).
- Content restrictions should limit advertisements that young people find appealing even if these are not specifically targeting minors or are specifically appealing to minors (but to adults as well).

Allowing alcohol advertisements that contain solely product information is an example of a content restriction that fulfils these criteria. A good example of effective content restriction is the French Loi Evin (see text box).

What's possible with a content restriction", an example from France

France is, together with Sweden, the only country in Europe with strong content restrictions. In France, alcohol marketing is regulated by statutory as well as self-regulatory regulations (STAP, 2010), of which the one with the most impact on the content of alcohol advertisements is the so-called Loi Evin. This 'code de sante publique' (code for public health) stipulates, in contrary to all other European alcohol marketing codes, what can be displayed and allows only objective product information: "The authorized advertising for alcoholic beverages is limited to the indication of the degree of alcohol by volume, origin and name of the product, name and address of manufacturer, agents and custodians and the method of production, terms of sale and consumption mode of the product". Also the package of alcoholic beverages must comply with these rules (Code for public health). With this last added aspect to the code all forms of alcohol advertisement are covered.



Before the introduction of the
Loi Evin



After the introduction (1991): only
product advertisement is allowed)

3.3. Current alcohol advertising is appealing to youngsters

Alcohol producers state that their target groups are adolescents aged 21 to 24 (Business Insights, 2007). However, in practice, large numbers of younger adolescents are exposed and attracted to alcohol marketing (CAMY, 2007). With the introduction of inexpensive products such as alcopops, alcoholic energy drinks and pre-mixed cocktails, and with packaging and marketing that appeals to young people, the alcohol industry intensified their focus on this group in recent years (Jernigan, 2001). Alcohol marketing targeting young people includes linking newly developed products to youth lifestyle through music, fashion, use of animation and sports (Jernigan, 2001).

Marketing is appealing to minors when it contains elements like humour, music, story, people characters (cartoons), animal characters, special effects or animations (Fielder et al., 2010). When elements like these are used, one can be almost certain that minors will like the commercial. These are nevertheless elements that are frequently used in advertisements.



Example of add that specifically is appealing for young people (from the AMMIE report of DHS 2011): Within the web presence of Astra, the animated character 'Paul' (see figure) leads the visitors of the site through the virtual trailing red light district of St. Pauli. The colours, animations and the catchy background music can be assigned to the youth culture. Astra is a beer brand promoted in Germany and being produced by the Holstein Brauerei AG, owned by Carlsberg.

3.4. Independent monitoring of alcohol advertising leads to surprising results

This report is a result of the monitoring of alcohol advertising in 2010 in five countries by independent institutes. Until this exercise, this monitoring was solely conducted at a national and European level by commercial organizations with a dependent relationship with the alcohol industry. The main European body that evaluates all advertising, including alcohol advertising, is the European Advertising Standard Alliance (EASA). Annually, EASA will verify that the advertisers adhere to the existing rules of self-regulation (EASA, 2008). EASA does not assess the rules on the possible harmful effects that alcohol advertising may have on the drinking behaviour of young people. EASA evaluates advertising on the premise that the existing rules are substantively accurate. EASA therefore relies upon its members to ensure that these rules are not violated. This leads members of EASA to the practice of regularly adjusting their rules in order to achieve optimal compliance, which seems very plausible.

When it comes to the practice of self-regulation, however, this means that the wording of the articles of the code has become more 'clever'. The goal seems to be not primarily the prevention of advertising that is attractive to young people, but to avoid the upheld of complaints about this.

To what extent do the rules of self regulation protect young people?

The main purpose of the AMMIE project is in the first place to check whether the current alcohol advertising is attractive to young people. In other words, in the project it is determined whether existing regulations are sufficiently effective to protect young people. AMMIE does therefore not a priori assume that the existing rules are substantively accurate. It looks at the impact of rules on the perception of young people. In addition, it also determines to what extent the national Advertising Code Committees uphold or reject filed complaints, and the argument used in making the decision. The objective of the project is thus not to determine whether the rules are adhered to. It may be so that in a particular case the rules are adhered to, but that the relevant advertisement is still attractive to young people and therefore undesirable from a public health perspective.

In the Netherlands and Denmark it was repeatedly found that there were complaints about alcohol advertisements because they seemed too attractive to young people. The verdict of the Advertising Code Committees in such cases often was: "It is conceivable that the relevant advertisement is also attractive to young people but there is no violation of the rules." Further analysis revealed that the rules were worded so cleverly that only in cases where demonstrable evidence proved that the advertisement was aimed specifically at young people, the rules were considered to be violated. In case of other complaints, such as complaints about erotic advertising or advertising that suggests excessive drinking, it became clear that clever wording of the articles of the code avoided a violation of the code. It had to be demonstrated that a commercial was very clearly showing sexual success as a result of drinking alcohol.

Self-regulation does not sufficiently protect Dutch youth

The Dutch Advertising Code for Alcoholic Beverages mainly includes rules on the content of alcohol advertising. This is a case of self-regulation. The alcohol industry considers this regulation, which exist since 1991, as the best of Europe (<http://www.cbk.nl/top/nieuws/full/nieuws1135.php>).

On behalf of the Ministry of Health, the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy (STAP) has monitored alcohol advertising in the Netherlands since 2002. STAP regularly and independently files complaints about the content of alcohol advertising to the Advertising Standards Committee. This committee is composed of representatives of the media, advertising agencies and advertisers. In the period 2002-2011, STAP filed a total of 400 complaints about the functioning of alcohol advertisements. Most of these complaints were rejected.

In the past 20 years, the ACA has changed several times and there have been a lot of discussions about the functioning of the Code. According to STAP, many of the changes have rather loosened/weakened the Code, instead of tightening/strengthen it. This is because the adaptations often lead to a more precise formulation of the code in order to realize a greater freedom of advertising. Remarkably, these changes to the Code are without exception presented as improvements, and therefore as being more protective of young people.

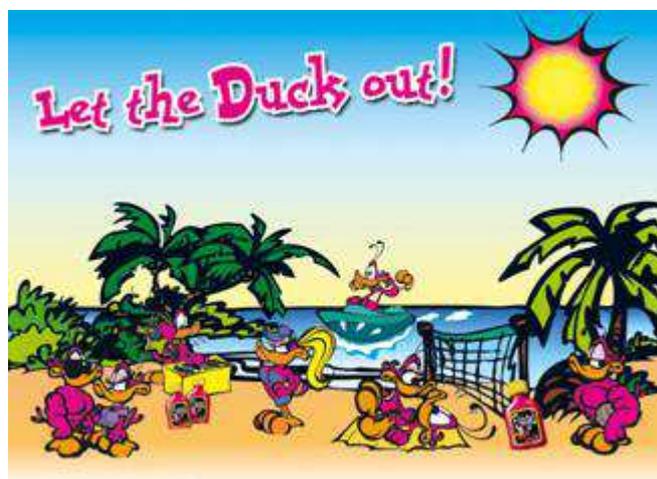
The experiences of STAP have revealed that several regulations of the Dutch Advertising Code are stated in a vague manner and are open for interpretation, while others articles are formulated very specifically. Especially the regulations about the protection of minors are defined that specifically, that any variation in advertising applicable to this article will not be upheld by the Committee. Due to this/as a result, young people are often still exposed to the harmful effect of attractive alcohol advertising.

Concrete example of the malfunctioning of self-regulation in the Netherlands:

The design is appealing for youngsters, but there is no proof that it is specifically targeting young people.

Advertisement (wallpaper; 2009) for the sweet alcoholic drink Flügel (10% alcohol by volume); STAP files a complaint because of the supposed appealing impact of this ad for young people. The ad was found not to be in breach with the Code. The Committee adjudicated as follows:

“The wallpaper cannot be judged to be specifically targeted at minors, even though



they are designed in a way that might also appeal to minors” (Advertising Code Committee, December 4th 2008).

When is stated that ‘alcohol marketing should not be specifically targeting minors’, the way this is interpreted is often open for questions. The main issue here is that while marketing expressions might not be ‘specifically aimed at’ minors (but also at adults), they can still be ‘appealing’ to them.

Regulatory adjustments make alcohol advertisements even more appealing to young Danes

In Denmark, the existing code changed in the fall of 2010 for the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Alcohol Marketing Committee. The Conclusion of the Danish NGO Landsraadet is that the existing code has been rearranged in a new and confusing way, compared to the original text. In the media the change of the Code was announced as follows:

“It is difficult for children and young people to avoid the large amount of alcohol ads in the Danish media. For that reason the alcohol marketing regulation is now being tightened”.

(Epn.dk, October 9. 2010, source: Berlingske Tidende).

NGO Landsraadet: ‘The revision was successfully sold in all media as a tightening, but is more like a loosening – for instance a crucial article as the prohibition of linking alcohol with sport is now watered down’. Before the change it was forbidden to link alcohol marketing with sports, and now it is allowed. The following concrete sport related articles have simply been deleted in the new Code:

Marketing of alcoholic beverages must not: - take place in sports clubs, in sports arenas or by sports grounds,- take place in magazines, which especially deal with sports, or in connection with sport pages or websites on sports -depict sporting events or sports exercise, including sport stars- be found on personal sport requisites, including sports clothing.

Example from Denmark: Linking alcohol and sport: possible with new so-called ‘tightened’ code.

Out-door ad placed on 7-Eleven stores.

The ad emerged in the middle of the World Championship of Football, spring 2010.

Earlier, the placing of alcohol on a football field was banned. The decision of the Alcohol Marketing Committee not to uphold a complaint of NGO Landsraadet was argued as follows:

“There is a direct link between the marketing activity and the World Championship of football. However, we



consider that the marketing activities all in all do not leave an impression of linking alcohol and actual sport exercise, since it appears in the background during the evening - the lights are out, and nor the audience, players or the rest of the stadium is visible. Therefore, the Committee does not express criticism.” The Decision of the Alcohol Marketing Committee, September 27. 2011

4. Regulations for alcohol advertising in Europe and in the AMMIE countries

4.1 European regulations for alcohol advertisements are considered to protect children against alcohol marketing.

A large variety of both content and volume restrictions in alcohol marketing regulations in Europe aims to protect young people against the harmful effects of alcohol marketing. Regulations can be embedded by law (legislation or statutory regulation), by voluntary codes of conduct of a company or a sector (self regulation or non-statutory regulation), or by a combination between state and non-state regulation (co-regulation). An investigation done by the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy showed many variations between European countries' laws, regulations and administrative provisions on the advertising of alcohol products. All 23 European countries studied had at least one regulation that covered alcohol marketing and advertising, with a total of 71 regulations. Of the 71 regulations, 45 were (partly) fixed by law and 26 were self-regulatory codes (De Bruijn, Johanson & Van den Broeck, 2010).

The regulations concerning alcohol advertising in Europe are primarily a national issue. Individual Member States largely define their own rules. At European level, however, only one statutory regulation and one recommendation exist. Since 2007, the statutory regulation concerns the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), succeeding the Television Without Frontiers Directive. The AVMSD Directive applies only to advertising via television and the internet (teleshopping).

Additionally, since 2001, a particular recommendation applies to all alcohol advertising for the EU Member States (Council Recommendation, 2001). This recommendation is specifically intended to protect young people against the harmful effects of alcohol. The recommendation also states that advertising should not be directed specifically at children and youths. Moreover, it is recommended that alcoholic beverages may not be designed or promoted to appeal to children and adolescents. Almost every European Member State has adopted these recommendations in the statutory regulations (with exception from the Netherlands), implemented at the national level (STAP, 2007b). Also, in self regulatory regulations, similar content restrictions can be found.

Finally, the European legislation applies to health claims. The "Regulation on nutrition and health claims made on food" requires "beverages containing more than 1.2% alcohol by volume shall not bear health claims". Alcohol consumption is far from healthy, and for this reason advertisements should not suggest the opposite.

4.2 Regulations for alcohol advertisements in the five AMMIE countries

4.2.1 Regulations for alcohol advertisements in Bulgaria

Before 2009, Bulgaria only had a legal regulation on alcohol (Law on Radio and Television, and Law

on Health). In 2010, the law was adapted in accordance with the new European AVMSD. The result is that alcohol sponsorship and product placement are now regarded as alcohol advertising. Alcohol advertising in Bulgaria may not be aimed at children and young people, may not be related to social or sexual success, and excessive use may not be encouraged. Direct advertising for spirits is prohibited, and advertising should in no way claim that alcohol consumption is healthy.

Since 2009, Bulgaria also has self-regulation (NCSR) which was established by the advertising industry and radio and television producers (The National Council for Self-Regulation). The NCSR describes itself as an independent body. The self-regulation contains a Code derived from the so-called National Ethical Standards. This Code is based in letter and spirit on the so-called Consolidated Code of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). The Code is only mandatory for members of the NCSR and the Bulgarian Association of Advertisers (BAA). Anyone can file complaints against possible violations of the Code.

The complaints committee of the law on alcohol advertisements (CEM) is dominated by members of the advertising industry, and according to a report by the European Commission it is not independent ('168 Hours' Newspaper (<http://prnew.info/monitoring-na-evropejskata-komisiq-sem-ne-e-nezavisim-organ/>)). Bulgaria knows no systematic monitoring of alcohol advertising. Consequently, violations of the self-regulation are not substantially sanctioned.

4.2.2 Regulations for alcohol advertisements in Denmark

In Denmark, there is one non-statutory regulation (self-regulation), and two statutory regulations which restrict the content of alcohol marketing. The self-regulation code became effective in March 2000 and is a joint venture of two Ministries, various organizations of the alcohol industry, trade organizations, The Consumers Council, and NGO's. The code is enforced by the Alcohol Marketing Committee (the former Committee of Enforcement). The head of the Committee is an independent Chairman. The Consumers Council and the Brewers Association are permanent members. The National Consumers Agency has an observer status. Everybody -consumers, companies and organisations- can file a complaint. Since 2008, complaints can also be filed via the website www.alkoholreklame-naevnet.dk. Normally, it takes about two months to reach a decision on a complaint. There are no sanctions whatsoever attached to the code. Furthermore, the Committee can express criticism in public.

As mentioned before, there are two legal regulations: one specifically for advertising on radio and television (the Broadcasting Act), and the general law on advertising (The Law of Marketing). The Broadcasting Act is derived from EU legislation (AVMSD) and has a complaints committee appointed by the Minister of Culture.

The Danish legislation states that alcohol may in no way be associated with children and youths. Moreover, it literally says that alcohol should not arouse the interest of children. Alcohol is systematically monitored in Denmark by Landsraadet, which is also a partner in the AMMIE project.

4.2.3 Regulations for alcohol advertisements in Germany

In the German law there are two regulations explicitly settling the marketing of alcoholic beverages. The first determines that before 6.00 p.m. alcohol advertisements may not be showed at public movie performances ("Federal Protection of Young Persons Act"). The second determines among other things that alcohol advertisements may not be directed to children and adolescents (Interstate Treaty on the protection of Minors in Broadcasting and in Telemedia). Breaches against these two marketing-related regulations can be reported to a legal authority. Additionally there are general regulations regarding the whole advertising branch, like e.g. "Broadcasting Treaty" (Rundfunkstaatsvertrag, RStV), and the "Unfair competition Act" (Gesetz gegen den unlauteren Wettbewerb, UWG), which comprises alcohol advertising as well, or the "Regulation on nutrition and health claims made on food" by the European Parliament and the Council. Article 4 (3). (Further information can be deduced from the German complaints report Chapter 1, p.5).

Most important is however, that there is, up to now, no official body systematically searching for violations of the relevant articles. Just as in Denmark self-regulation of alcohol advertisements is the most dominant regulation in Germany. This regulation is based on the voluntary Code of Conduct on Commercial Communication for Alcoholic Beverages ", written in 2005 by relevant commercial parties. The code is completely focused on the content of advertisements. The code states among other things that alcohol advertising should not be aimed at minors and abusive consumption should not be encouraged.

Monitoring of alcohol advertisements and testing compliance of the rules takes place only scarcely in Germany.

4.2.4 Regulations for alcohol advertisements in Italy

National regulations in Italy include statutory and non-statutory regulations. Statutory regulations are quite complicated, as they are part of different laws on advertising in general and/or focused on one medium only, and/or aimed at the protection of minors.

The Law on Alcohol and Alcohol-Related problems is the only statutory regulation with a specific article on alcohol advertising. Non-statutory regulation is represented by the Advertising Self Regulation Code, first issued in 1966, and periodically revised. The Advertising Self Regulation Code is formulated and updated by Istituto dell'Autodisciplina Pubblicitaria (IAP), which is a non-profit organisation including 18 bodies, including companies and corporations investing in advertising, professional organisations and individuals, and advertising media. However, the choice to be a IAP member, and therefore to subscribe the Self-Regulation Code, is up to the economic operators. In general, statutory regulations mainly cover traditional media, as TV, Radio, and in a few cases cinema and print, whereas sponsoring, internet promotion, digital media and promotional items are not included.

The complaint system includes two adjudication institutions, the abovementioned Institute for Advertising Self-Regulation (Istituto dell'Autodisciplina Pubblicitaria – IAP), and the National Authority for Commercial Communication (Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato – AGCM). IAP's main objective is to act and ensure that all marketing communications are honest, truthful and proper, and carried out as a service providing information for consumers.

Complaints about violations can be filed with any individual or organization through the use of a simple and accessible form on the IAP's website www.iap.it, which is sent to the Jury.

The National Authority for Commercial Communication (Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato – AGCM), is the other institution individuals and organizations can complain to. The AGCM is responsible for protecting consumers from unfair commercial communications and from misleading advertising, having also the power to impose sanctions and fines. Their decisions are defined as being completely independent from the Government or any other political influence.

Both institutions (IAP and AGCM), do not only have rules functioning differently, but also use different evaluation criteria, thereby sometimes giving conflicting final judgments (experience AMMIE project).

4.2.5 Regulations for alcohol advertisements in the Netherlands

Alcohol advertising in the Netherlands is mainly regulated through self-regulation. It is remarkable that in the Netherlands the legal European directive AVMSD, regarding the regulations on alcohol advertising on TV, is not recorded in a legal regulation but is part of the self-regulation. The articles on alcohol advertising in the AVMSD are consequently found in the Advertising Code for Alcoholic Beverages (ACA). The alcohol code is part of the overall national advertising code, and is directed by the Advertising Code Foundation (ACF). The code states, among other things, that alcohol advertisements may not be aimed specifically at young people and that advertising should not suggest that alcohol consumption leads to social and sexual success. Also, advertising may not encourage excessive alcohol consumption, and health claims are prohibited.

Besides the self-regulation code drawn up by the alcohol industry, since the first of January 2010 the Netherlands knows a law for alcohol advertisements (Dutch Media Law). This law states that no alcohol advertising may be broadcasted on television and radio between 06.00 am and 09.00 pm. When an advertising practice exceeds one or more of these regulations, a complaint against this certain advertising can be filed with the Advertising Code Foundation (self-regulatory body) or to the Directorate for the Media (statutory body).

5. Reviewing self-regulation: the views of young people versus the decisions of the Advertising Standards Committees

Results from Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands

5.1 Explanation of the method

As part of the AMMIE project, young people -aged 13-17 years -in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands were approached with the request to assess, in four rounds, a number of advertisements shown in 2010. All in all, in the five countries 199 young people have participated in the 5 Youth Panels, of which 150 took part in all four rounds. The participating boys and girls came from varying educational levels. All of the youths participated with parental consent. Participants were pre-trained in using the software. Also, they received information about the risks of alcohol use and the commercial intentions of alcohol advertising in advance. Prior and after the program, young people filled out a questionnaire on their alcohol consumption. The advertisements were selected by the project partners in the five countries. All media: TV, print, billboards, internet and events were monitored for at least one year.

5.2 Reviewing self-regulation in Bulgaria

5.2.1 Submitted complaints on alcohol advertising in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, in 2010 the NGO Horizonti filed 21 complaints about 10 alcohol advertisements because they appeared to be in conflict with the rules. In total, this amounted to 42 separate complaints. Except for one, all complaints were filed with the Advertising Code Committee of the NCSR (self-regulation). Of these 42 complaints, 28 were refused and 14 were assigned.

A Bulgarian Youth Panel consisting of 29 young people aged 12-18 years was asked to express their opinion about 19 of these 42 complaints. The average age of the participants was 15 years. A number of 21 youths have participated in all four rounds. They were asked whether the challenged advertisement appeals to their peers and whether the advertisement suggests that alcohol consumption leads to social, sexual or sporting success.

Table 5: Theme, number, and outcome of complaints on alcohol advertisements in Bulgaria (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of advertisements	Number of (sub) complaints	Not upheld	Upheld	No decision yet
Attractive to youth	1	6	6	0	
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption					
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success	9	36	22	14	
Total	10	42	28	14	

Table 6: Complaints rejected: decisions of the Advertising Code Committee sorted by theme compared with opinions of the Youth Panel in Bulgaria (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of (sub) complaints rejected by the Committee (not upheld)	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to youth	3	3	
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption			
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success	10	8	2
Total	13	11	2

Table 7: Accepted complaints: decisions of the Advertising Code Standards Committee sorted by theme compared with opinions of the Youth Panel in Bulgaria (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of (sub) complaints upheld by the Committee	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to youth			
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption			
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success	6	1	5
Total	6	1	1

In summary: views of the Youth Panel versus those of the Advertising Code Committee:

Of the 19 (sub)complaints that were presented to the Youth Panel:

- In all cases the young people disagreed with the Committee on complaints about the attractiveness to young people.
- In some cases the youths agreed with the Committee on complaints about supposed social, sexual, or athletic success. In the cases where they agreed, it concerned advertising practices of a certain 'vulgar' quality because of their highly visible erotic elements.
- With regard to complaints that were rejected (13 times), the youths almost always (11 times) disagreed with the committee.

Conclusion of Horizonti 21:

- When comparing the decisions of the Advertising Code Committee on the questionable ads with the opinions of young people, one can see the shortcomings of the regulations.
- Marketing is appealing to minors when it contains elements as humour, music, story, human characters (cartoons), animal characters, special effects, or animations (Fielder et al.2009). When elements like these are used, one can be almost certain that minors will like the commercial. These are nevertheless also elements that are frequently used in advertisements. The advertising code states that alcohol advertisements may not be specifically aimed at minors, but this appears to be a multi-interpretable statement.

5.2.2 Examples of questionable ads from Bulgaria (2010)

First example: Beer Ariana (website)

Youth Panel: ad is appealing to our peers

Code Committee: ad is not aimed at young people

Complaint rejected

NB: only two examples from the website of Ariana Beer are shown in this report.

Reason for the complaint:

the ad contains elements that are appealing to minors: humour, music, story, human characters (cartoons), animal characters, special effects or



animations. Different sports are represented in the form of games associated with the consumption of beer. The campaign seems to be designed to attract children and young people.

Opinion Youth Panel:

While the Advertising Code Committee finds this ad is not specifically appealing to adolescents, 17 out of 21 members of the Youth Rating Panel found this ad appealing, 12 found the animations attractive, and 17 mentioned that in the ad one can find styles (music, characters, language, colours, etc.), related to youth culture. Also, 9 respondents answered that, according to them, this ad is designed to be attractive to children and adolescents. Furthermore, 13 out of 21 think that the target group is 18-25 years old, and 6 out of 21 think it is under 18 years old.

Decision Advertising Code Committee:

The website is designed in a humorous manner, evoking a playful attitude in the visitor. It can be assumed that such attitudes are mostly present in young people, especially children, but this is not a sufficient argument to claim that the advertisement is directed at a group of minors. All 6 sub-complaints were rejected (see Horizonti; 2011).

Second example Vodka Flirt – Cherry (commercial)

Youth Panel: ad implies social and sexual success

Code Committee: ad does not imply social and sexual success as a result of alcohol use.

Complaint rejected



Two images from the tv-commercial for Vodka Flirt (Cherry)

Reason for the complaint:

The girl in the video uses her tongue and manages to tie a ribbon on the handle of a cherry cocktail to win the heart of a famous Bulgarian artist. The ad clearly shows a message that alcohol contributes to social and sexual success.

Opinion Youth Panel:

While the Advertising Code Committee adjudicated that this ad does not imply social or sexual success, 11 out of 25 respondents state that the advertising implies social success, and 8 think that by consuming the product their peers will expect their social success to improve. Also, 18 respondents

think that the ad implies sexual success, and 16 think that by consuming the product their peers will expect their sexual success to improve. 24 respondents think that the characters in the ad are young models; 20 think that in the ad one can find styles (music, characters, language, colours, etc.), related to youth culture. 6 respondents state that according to them both the product and the ad are designed to be attractive to young people. 22 young people think that the music will appeal to their peers, 17 state the same goes for the language, and 18 for the images. 17 out of 25 respondents think that this ad will be attractive to their peers.

Advertising Code Committee:

From the content of the ad, one cannot draw the conclusion that the social or sexual success of the characters is a result of the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

In the TV commercial, there are no visual vulgar and repulsive elements or actions which are in contrast with generally accepted Bulgarian social norms concerning decency and morality. The characters in the ad are decent in clothing and appearance, and do not carry out obscene or vulgar actions. In the ad, alcohol does not appear in whatever form (see Horizonti; 2011).

Third example: Vodka Flirt – ‘Sex can lead to love’ (billboard)

Youth Panel: ad is appealing and implies social and sexual success

Code Committee: ad is not in violation with national ethical rules for advertising

Complaint rejected



Reason for the complaint:

A highly erotic billboard shows a woman who ties a man up with her hair. The ad clearly shows the message that alcohol contributes to social and sexual success.

Sex can lead to love. This does not have to stop you.

Vodka Flirt – Games for the advanced

Opinion Youth Panel:

In discordance with the decision of the Advertising Code Committee 16 out of 25 respondents state that the advertisement implies social success, and 18 think that by consuming the product their peers will expect their social success to improve; 10 respondents think that the ad also implies sexual success, and 10 think that by consuming the product their peers will expect their sexual success to improve; 22 think that the characters in the ad are young models; 18 think that in the ad one can find styles (music, characters, language, colours, etc.), related to youth culture; 9 respondents state that according to them the product is designed to be attractive to young people; 8 people think that the ad is designed to be attractive to young people; 15 young people think that the language will appeal to their peers; 23 state the same for the images; 18 out of 25 respondents think that this ad will be attractive to their peers.

Advertising Code Committee:

The outdoor advertising by Winery Peshtera AD for vodka Flirt is not in violation with national ethical rules for advertising and commercial communications in Bulgaria. The iconography shows a discreet erotic embrace of a girl hugging a young man, by simply using her hair (see Horizonti; 2011).

fourth example: Johnnie Walker – Jenson Button (tv commercial)

Youth Panel: ad is appealing and shows sportive success

Code Committee: no problem, on the contrary, this ad shows responsible behaviour and functions as a warning.

Complaint rejected



Reason for complaint:

This advertisement *shows* a collection of important moments in Jenson Button's successful season in Formula 1. It shows sportive success in relation to alcohol use and is directed to children.

Opinion Youth Panel:

While the Advertising Code Committee finds this ad not specifically appealing to adolescents, 15 out of 20 members of the Youth Rating Panel think that this ad will be appealing to their peers. 12 out of 20 think that the humoristic elements in the ad will be appealing to their peers, and 12 out of 20 participants think that the participants will expect their sportive success to improve after consuming the product in the ad.

Advertising Code Committee:

The commercial communication is not in breach with the prescribed general standards for spirits, nor with the texts dictating national ethical rules for advertising and commercial communications in Bulgaria. Rather, using popular sports personalities is a hint to conduct a responsible, fair and transparent advertising policy of the company - with a clear message not to drive after drinking. The claim that the advertising is aimed at children is unfounded. On the contrary; it is a kind of warning for those who would drive after drinking (see Horizonti, 2011).

5.3 Reviewing self-regulation in Denmark

5.3.1 Submitted complaints on alcohol advertising in Denmark

In Denmark, during the project a total of 35 complaints concerning 17 advertisements were filed by Landsraadet. The Youth Panel, consisting of 40 young Danish people, subjected about 10 of the 35 complaints to their judgement. The selected complaints were all relevant to young people.

Table 8: Theme, number, and outcome of complaints about alcohol advertisements in Denmark (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of advertising practices	Number of (sub)complaints	Not upheld	Upheld	No decision yet
Attractive to youth		7	4	0	3
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption		7	5	1	1
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success		15	8	7	
Other (unethical e.g.)		6	5	1	
Total	17	35	22	9	4

(*; in Denmark, the rule that alcohol advertisements may not be related to sports applies)

Table 9: Rejected complaints: decisions of the Advertising Code Committee sorted by theme , compared to the view of the Youth Panel in Denmark (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of (sub) complaints rejected by the Committee (not upheld)	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to young people	5	5	
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption	2	2	
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success	3	3	
Total	10	10	

Table 10: Accepted complaints: decisions of the Advertising Code Committee sorted by subject, compared to the view of the Youth Panel in Denmark (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of (sub) complaints upheld by the Committee	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to young people			
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption	1		1
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success	1		1
Total	2	0	2

In summary: views of the Youth Panel versus those of the Advertising Code Committee:

Of the 12 (sub) complaints that were presented to the Youth Panel:

- . In all cases concerning the attractiveness to young people, the young people disagreed with the committee.
- . The young people disagreed with the committee on all the rejected complaints (10 times).
- . The young people agreed with the committee on the accepted complaints (2 times).

Conclusion of Landsraadet:

The Committee upheld none of the complaints dealing with targeting minors. The Youth Panel also found more ads were *encouraging excessive drinking*, while the Committee only upheld one. About *social success*, the Committee did not uphold any complaints, but the Youth Panel did. *Humour* was a significant factor for the youngsters in liking an ad. Humour is boosting the effect of an ad, but is not included in the Danish regulation. Thus, the lesson from the Youth Panel is exactly this; the Committee does not sufficiently protect children and young people from attractive ads containing humour, life style elements, and encouragements to drink excessively. Also, it does not prevent the industry from linking alcohol with sport. In 2010, the code made this linking even easier to do.

5.3.2 Examples of questionable ads from Denmark (2010)

First example: Little Blue Elephant beer from Carlsberg (logo on Product)

Youth Panel: design can be attractive for younger children but not for our peers



Code Commission: design can be possibly attractive for children, but we have no problem with it. It primarily appeals to grown-ups/adults.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

According to Landsraadet, the figure is targeting children, and therefore is in breach with the code which prescribes that marketing of alcoholic beverages is not allowed to be aimed at children and young people. The use of pictures, figures, comics, or icons with a special appeal to children and young people is not allowed. The drawing is an update from 1956; Carlsberg since long-time used a 'strong elephant' as a symbol.

Opinion Youth Panel:

Half of the youngsters (20 out of 40) had the opinion that this product uses a design that children and young people find attractive (11 did not know and 9 disagreed). Most of the youngsters (20) think that their peers will like the cartoon (13 did not know and 7 disagreed). However, almost half of the youngsters (18) disagree that the ad is designed to appeal to minors, 14 do agree, and 8 do not know.

Decision Advertising Code Committee:

The little blue elephant looks like something out of a children's book; but the design is not a problem. The marketing reflects the historical connection of Carlsberg with the elephant logo and is therefore more a grown-up humoristic identification campaign than a comic in which the content has an appeal to children and young people (see: Landsraadet, 2011).

Second example: Unibrew Tempt Cider (TV/Cinema commercial)

Youth Panel: children and young people find this ad attractive

Code Commission:

the commercial is not in violation with the code (decision came after 8 months)

Complaint rejected.

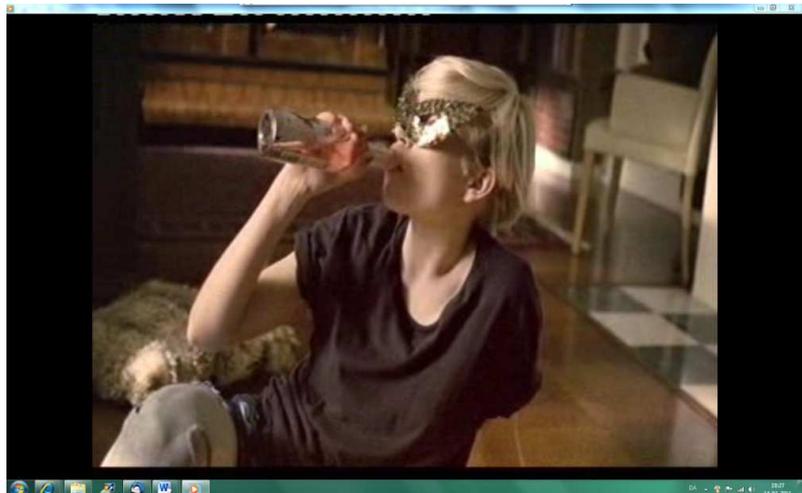
Reason for the complaint:

According to Landsraadet, the ad is targeting children by using

a model, which looks fragile and underage, and speaks with a young, girly voice. The atmosphere is airy and dreamy. This is emphasized by soft music and birds' song in the background.

The ad touches on the theme of temptation to make ones' alcohol debut. "*I was tempted*", says the girl, meaning: I started drinking. "*Now I got a secret*", meaning: my parents and boyfriend do not know I am drinking.

Opinion Youth Panel:



The majority of the youngsters (29 out of 40) stated that this ad is attractive to children and young people. Most of the youngsters (27 out of 40) did not believe the model to be below the age of 18.

Opinion advertiser:

“As Tempt Cider’s advertiser we hereby reject that we are trying to appeal specifically to minors. The target group of Tempt Cider is younger women between 18 and 30 years, and the model in the ad discussed is 24 years old.

Decision Code Commission: The Committee had some considerations about the age of the girl and the appeal to youngsters in the ad. But in the end it decides not to uphold any of the complaints with reference to the decision of the Radio-TV Board.

“The Alcohol Marketing Committee remarks that the setting of the advertisement is very grown up, it has no immediate appeal to children and young people. The Committee finds though, that the physical appearance of the model combined with the setting can convey the impression of a girl still living with her parents, wherefore the advertisement is considered to appeal to children and young people.

The Committee concludes that the marketing activity as a whole falls within a grey area, but does not provide the basis to express criticism with reference to the decision of the Radio-TV Board of March 4, 2011 (see: Landsraad, 2011).

Third example: Heineken Walk-in-Closet (TV/ Cinema commercial)

Youth Panel: super attractive ad which links alcohol to social success.

Code Commission: no problem because it is all humour.

Complaint rejected



Reason for the complaint:

The ad shows a housewarming party held by a well-off couple. The woman shows off her walk-in-closet, while the man shows off his walk-in-fridge with Heineken Beer, extending from floor to ceiling. The walk-in-fridge causes the greatest cheering and the men are worshipping it in a state of exalted

hysteria. According to Landsraadet, the ad is linking alcohol to social success, and encourages excessive drinking.

Opinion Youth Panel:

The opinion on the popularity of the ad among peers is very clear: 37 out of 40 participants think their peers will like the ad. Most of the youngsters (26) find that this ad links alcohol to social success. Most of the youngsters (25) find that this ad is encouraging excessive drinking. Extra comments of the youngsters: -*“Simply brilliant!”* -*“The worlds´ best ad ever, no doubt!”*

Advertising Code Committee:

The Commission regards the humorous nature of the ad as the main reason why the ad does *not* link alcohol with success, as well as the reason why the ad is *not* encouraging excessive drinking. Also, the consumption of products is not shown in the ad, and the ad does not “set the scene for large or excessive consumption” (see: Landsraadet, 2011).

Fourth example: Carlsberg Goal Party (TV/Cinema commercial; context World Championship)

Youth Panel: very attractive and linked to sportive success

Code Committee: not targeting minors, not linked with sport, but linked with success (more precisely: improved physical capacity).

Complaint: partly upheld

Reason for the complaint:

In this ad, a couple of young guys are using the containers in a wealthy suburban neighbourhood for target practise. The shots are wild;



nevertheless they hit their goal every time. Carlsberg claims the honour of this success promoting the beer as a kind of magic sports drink. The ad is linking alcohol and success and is targeting minors; football in the garden being a typical children’s game. The ad is even linking to professional sports exercise making its finale at a football stadium.

Opinion Youth Panel:

Almost all (38 out of 40) youths found that their peers would like the ad. Most of the youngsters (27) thought that this ad contains elements which are associated with youth culture, 13 said this was not the case. The youngsters were not sure whether this ad links alcohol and a successful life or not; 21 said yes, 19 said no. On the other hand, most of the youngsters (28) found that in this ad, drinking results in sportive success, while 12 said no. Some comments: *“This ad is outstanding; it combines joy, alcohol and socializing”*. *“A fantastic ad with a charm, that appeals to young beer- and football-loving people. Simply outstanding!”*

Advertising Code Committee:

The Board acknowledges the breach of the code’s article about alcohol and improved physical capacity, but disagrees with the complaint that this ad is linking alcohol and sports as well as targeting minors: “Carlsberg’s marketing expresses a connection between the alcoholic product and an improved physical capacity. This is in breach with the code (see: Landsraad, 2011).

Comment Landsraad: ‘The Code Committee ignores the link between alcohol and sport, even when this ad shows a very active sports exercise’.

5.4 Reviewing self-regulation in Germany

5.4.1 Submitted complaints on alcohol advertising in Germany

In 2010, the German partner (German Centre for Addiction Issues) filed complaints about 15 advertising practices. There were a total of 35 different complaints. All complaints except for one were filed with the German Advertising Standards Council. Of the 35 complaints, 29 were rejected and 6 were accepted.

All in all, 30 young people have subjected 13 sub complaints to their opinion. The selected cases all were advertising practices relevant for young people. All of the selected complaints were rejected by the committee.

Table 11: Subject, number, and outcome of complaints on alcohol advertisements in Germany (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of advertisements	Number of (sub)complaints	Not upheld	Upheld	Not decided yet
Attractive to young people		7	7		
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption*		3	3		
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success *8		8	8		
Other (e.g. actors are too young)		17	11	6	
Total	15	35	29	6	

(* In the German self-regulation code it says abusive in stead of excessive)

(**advertising practices which suggest that alcohol enhances physical performance fall into this category)

Table 12: Rejected complaints: decisions of the Advertising Code Committee sorted by subject, compared to the view of the Youth Panel in Germany (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of (sub) complaints rejected by the Committee (not upheld)	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to young people	4	4	
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption	1	1	
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success	8	6	2
Total	13	11	2

In summary: views of the Youth Panel versus those of the Advertising Code Committee:

Of the 13 (sub)complaints that were presented to the Youth Panel:

- . Concerning the complaints on attractiveness to young people, the young people disagreed with the committee in all four cases.
- . Concerning complaints on basis of suggesting social, sexual or athletic success, the young people mostly (6 out of 8 times) disagreed with the committee.
- . In total 20 (sub)complaints were rejected by the committee; only 13 of these were presented to the Youth Panel.

Conclusion of DHS

The rules of the Code of Conduct on Commercial Communication for Alcoholic Beverages are so superficial and patchy that the advertising companies can easily circumvent the self-commitments of the German Advertising Standards Council. For example: in the code there are no concrete specifications about elements that may be appealing to children and youngsters. A meta-analysis carried out by the Federal Ministry of Health shows that the employment of humoristic elements, colours, melodies, and celebrities is particularly appealing to young people (Haustein & Schreckenber 2002). This is also underlined by the prevailing results of the youth panel ratings. As the code does not include reference to such elements, the council was often able to reject a (sub)complaint, even if the features of the corresponding marketing campaign were clearly attracting the youngsters questioned.

Common justifications for a refusal on the part of the committee were: ‘an advertisement was not only appealing to youngsters but also to adults, and can therefore not be misconstrued as targeting minors.’ For this reason, the existing self-regulating code is definitely not able to protect young people from being attracted to alcohol advertisement.

5.4.2 Examples of questionable ads from Germany (2010)

First example: TV ad for the pre-mixed beer V+ Curuba

Code Commission: the design elements and the linguistic expressions within the advertising activity are not clearly directed at minors.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint: the ad for the pre-mixed alcoholic beverage V+ Curuba (Brauerei C. & A.Veltins GmbH & Co) was broadcasted on the TV music channel VIVA (primarily watched by a younger public) that (out of necessity) not only contains the music reviews, but also the sponsoring advices for the respective programs. The ad in question displays a horde of young people hilariously celebrating and dancing to a catchy melody in a subway wagon. Because of the informal style of language, the employment of juvenile expressions like “cool tracks” and “phat beats”, as well as the memorable background music and the lively atmosphere in the scene, the clip is, according to the complainer, aimed at minors. Moreover the models were exceedingly young looking.



Opinion Youth Panel:

According to the majority of the respondents, the clip (25 of the 30) as well as the promoted product (19 of the 30) is designed to attract children and youngsters. Furthermore, almost all pupils stated that the commercial itself (24 of the 30), the protagonists (22), the style of language (28), the colours (29), and the music (29) are appealing to their peers. Finally, all participants of the survey found that the elements used in the spot are connected to/associated with youth culture.

Advertising Standards Committee:

The design elements (acting characters, the first-name-basis, background music) as well as the linguistic expressions used in the spot are not clearly directed at children and young people. The actors give the impression of being young adults. Truly, the protagonists act mainly in a juvenile exuberant way, or rather not in a typical adult way. However, such a behaviour does not implicate a breach of the code (DHS 2011).

Second example: Advertisement for Havana Club (ad in magazine)

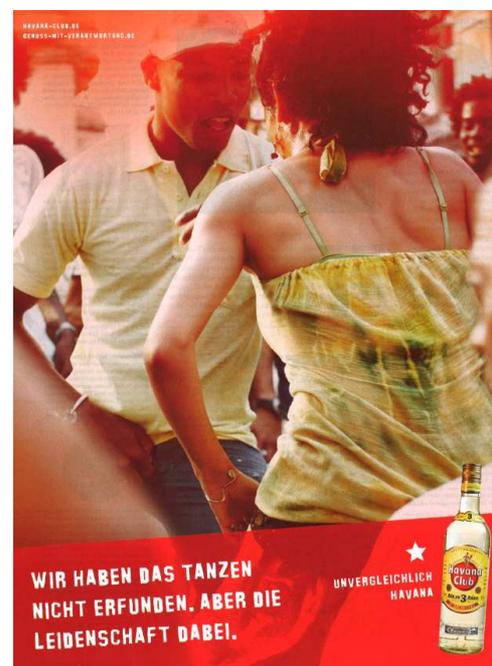
Youth Panel: This ad has a disinhibiting effect on young people and encourages young people to drink.

Code Committee: This ad does not have a disinhibiting effect; it merely refers to Cuban lifestyle and associated music, rhythm, and passion.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

The ad superficially depicts two persons dancing exuberantly in a public space. At the bottom of the picture a bottle of the Havana Club rum is printed, accompanied by the slogan: “*We haven’t invented dancing, but the passion along with it*”. According to DHS, the advertisement suggests that the consumption of the promoted spirit has a positive impact on a person’s dancing style. Consequently, people who are shy and unsure about the perceived image of their dancing style, may credit the consumption of the Havana Club rum with a disinhibiting effect as well as an increase of charisma and passion for dancing . For these reasons, the ad printed violates the advertising code, stressing that “commercial communication shall not make any claim relating to the disinhibiting effect of alcoholic beverages”.



Opinion Youth Panel:

The vast majority (25 of 30) in the survey thought that the product promoted in the print ad has a disinhibiting effect on people. Additionally, around 21 of the participants stated that the advertisement encourages children and youngsters to consume alcoholic beverages.

Advertising Standards Committee:

The Committee rejected the complaint, as it is considered to be manifestly unfounded. The advertising activity is not in breach with the code, since the picture does not imply a causal link between the consumption of the spirit advertised and a disinhibiting effect. The slogan, as well as the display of the two dancers, alludes to the origin of the Havana Club Rum (Cuba) and thus conveys the Cuban lifestyle of music, rhythm, and passion (DHS 2011).

Third example: Advertisement for König Pilsener (TV commercial)

Young Panel: We (almost) all know Boris Becker as a former tennis player.

Code Committee: This commercial does not display an athlete drinking. Children and youngsters certainly have not witnessed his active sports career, so it is allowed to ask him to promote beer.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

This spot was part of a marketing campaign in which the former famous tennis player and Wimbledon victor Boris Becker promotes 'König Pilsener'.

The spot is in breach with the advertising code, underlining that "commercial communication for alcoholic beverages shall not show athletes drinking or promoting drinking".

Opinion of Youth Panel:

25 of 30 of the youngsters indicate that they know Boris Becker as an athlete.

Advertising Code Committee:

As Boris Becker has resigned from competitive sports a long time ago, the commercial does not display an athlete drinking, and thus does not violate the Code. Children and youngsters have certainly not witnessed his active sports career (DHS 2011).



Fourth example: Advertisement for Paulaner (website)

Opinion of Youth Panel: The website is attractive to us (opinion of 15 (50%) of the youngsters, and the marketing of an alcohol-free product is not clearly obvious.

Opinion of Code Commission: The website is not attractive to young people because it does not contain elements of youth culture. It is obvious that it is promoting an alcohol free product.

Complaint rejected





Reason for the complaint:

Paulaner is particularly marketed in the South of Germany, supporting the club “FC Bayern München”, which is also very popular among youngsters. On the website, athletes of Bayern München are posing for the non-alcoholic product “Paulaner Hefe-Weißbier Alkoholfrei”. The images do not reveal any indication that the beverage advertised for is an alcohol-free product. Also, the logo of the brewery does not explicitly refer to the non-alcoholic beer. Therefore, the website breaches the youth-related self-commitment of the industry.

Opinion Youth Panel:

According to nearly all youngsters (28 of 30), it is not visible that the advertisement reviewed promotes an alcohol-free product. Furthermore, half of the pupils stressed that the advertising strategy attracts people of their age group.

Advertising Standards Committee:

The website promotes an alcohol-free beer, and this is also obvious to the visitors of the site. The marketing activity cannot be misconstrued as being appealing to youngsters, as the commercial contents of the website do not contain elements related to youth culture (DHS 2011).

5.5 Reviewing self-regulation in Italy

5.5.1 Submitted complaints on alcohol advertising in Germany

In 2010, Eurocare Italia filed 38 complaints about 26 alcohol advertising practices. All complaints about these 26 advertisements were sent to the Institute of Self-Regulation Advertising (IAP), 18 were also sent to the National Authority for Commercial Communication (AGCM).

In order to be able to compare these results with the results from the other partners of AMMIE, in this document only the complaints that were sent to the Institute for Self-Regulation Advertising are reported in detail. Of the 38 complaints, 11 (29%) were upheld, 20 were not upheld, and 7 are not yet decided upon. All complaints that were sent to the National Authority for Commercial Communication were not answered so far, or were not upheld. The Authority stated that all marketing practices were in

line with the existing regulations. The details of the answers of the AGCM are described in the national report of Eurocare Italia (Eurocare Italia 2011).

About the Youth Panel: 22 complaints were included in the questionnaires for the Youth Rating Panel. Primarily, the complaints were about substantive problems, such as minors, stimulation of excessive drinking, and sexual success. A total number of 57 youngsters were initially contacted in the attempt to involve them in the rating panel. At the end of the rating activity, only 22 young people completed all online questionnaires (1 pre-test, 4 ratings, and 1 post-test). These 22 youngsters are high school students in the age group 14-18 years, and consists of 12 boys and 10 girls.

Table 13: Subject, number, and outcome of complaints on alcohol advertisements in Italy (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of advertisements	Number of (sub)complaints	Not upheld	Upheld	Not decided yet
Attractive to young people		13	9	2	2
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption		8	3	4	1
Suggests social, sexual or athletic success		5	4	1	0
Other (health claim and misleading)		10	4	4	2
Total	26	36	20	11	5

Table 14: Rejected complaints: decisions of the Advertising Code Committee sorted by subject, compared to the view of the Youth Panel in Italy (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of (sub) complaints rejected by the Committee (not upheld)	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to young people	7	7	
Stimulating excessive alcohol consumption	2	2	
Suggests sexual, social or sportive success	3	3	
Total	12	12	

Table 15: Accepted complaints: decisions of the Advertising Standards Committee sorted by subject, compared to the view of the Youth Panel in Italy (2010)

Nature of the complaint	Number of (sub) complaints upheld by the Committee	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to young people	2	2	0
Stimulates excessive alcohol consumption	3	0	3
Suggests social, sexual or sportive success			
Total	5	2	3

In summary: views of the Youth Panel versus those of the Advertising Code Committee:

Of the 17 relevant (sub-) complaints that were presented to the Youth Panel:

- In 12 cases, the young people disagreed with the committee on the attractiveness to youngsters, the stimulation of excessive alcohol consumption, and the suggestion of social, sexual, and athletic success.
- The youngsters varied in agreeing (3) and disagreeing (2) about complaints that were accepted by the committee.

Conclusion of Eurocare Italia:

As shown in Table 14 and 15 youngsters agree with the judgement of IAP about 6 (sub)complaints, and they disagree with the judgement in 12 cases. In particular, the agreement is mainly on 3 of the complaints about stimulating excessive drinking. Young people disagree when IAP does not uphold the complaints concerning the themes of minors, and social and sexual success, about which the youngsters have expressed opposing opinions.

The main rating panel results can be summarised as follows:

- The use of cartoons is very attractive for youngsters; even if the Committees answer that it is not specific of youth culture;
- In many cases, youngsters notice that other elements of the ads (sex, irony, originality) are more visible than the product itself, and these elements are used to make the message more attractive;
- When sex is too explicit, it is not very attractive for young people.
- Ads that show people drinking in social contexts or parties get high scores in terms of attractiveness.

5.5.2 Examples of questionable ads from Italy (2010)

First example: Ceres Beer (tv-commercial)

Opinion Youth Panel: this commercial is attractive to our peers to our peers

Opinion Code Commission: using cartoons does not necessarily imply the targeting of children or adolescents.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

this video, shown on TV channels and on

the producer's website, is actually a cartoon with a city that is initially grey, and becomes very coloured and light when a Ceres Beer metro train passes: people start dancing and having fun. There is a clear connection between beer and colours, beer and fun, and beer and partying. The final "prevention" messages; "Take the Tube", "Don't drink and drive", are shown for just one second at the end of the clip. The complaint has been filed because of the use of styles (such as characters, motifs, or colours) associated with youth culture.

Opinion Youth Panel:

out of 22 respondents, 21 think that this advertising is attractive to their peers, 13 also believe that the target groups are children and adolescents (14-18 years old). 7 students think that the recipients are between the ages of 19 and 22, 2 believe they are 26-35 years old, 10 students think the age of the main consumers of the beer are minors and adolescents (14-18 years old), 10 believe they can be between 19 and 25 years old, and 2 believe they might be between 26 and 35 years old.

Decision of the Advertising Code Committee: the complaint is rejected because *the use of cartoons does not necessarily mean that the ad is targeting children or adolescents*. Moreover, the Committee states that the final prevention messages are clear enough, as well as coherent with the whole idea of partying (Eurocare Italia 2011).

Second example: Caffè Borghetti (website)

Opinion Youth Panel: the advertising is attractive to our peers and it could give the impression that drinking makes social relationships easier, also contributing to social and sexual success.

Opinion Code Commission: the message is acceptable and mainly ironic.

Complaint rejected





Reason for the complaint:

young people are shown drinking this liqueur, implying it is a social facilitator and making explicit reference to sexuality. The image of melting ice cubes when a beautiful, not too-dressed girl goes by is accompanied by the voice message "Seduction at first sip". The complain was filed referring art. 2 of the statutory regulation D.M. 425 1991: *alcohol advertising must not create the impression that alcohol use contributes to social or sexual success*, as well as to the Council Recommendations.

Opinion Youth Panel:

20 students out of 22 think that the advertising is attractive to their peers and it could give the impression that drinking makes social relationships easier, also contributing to social and sexual success.

Decision of the Advertising Code Committee:

rejected. *No violation has been identified, since the message delivered in this communication is acceptable and mainly ironic. The melting ice cubes represents only a seductive game between adults, beyond the promoted product* (Eurocare Italia, 2011).

Third example: Vodka Artic (TV commercial)

Opinion Youth Panel: this commercial is attractive to our peers and gives the impression alcohol facilitates social success.

Opinion Code Commission: the ad does not refer to the relation between alcohol and facilitation of social relationships.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

TV ad broadcasted in national TV networks. The slogan “Artic breaks the ice” refers to the idea that drinking Artic Vodka is a social facilitator, illustrated by the use of images with sexual implications. The advertisement is in



contrast with the Council Recommendations 2001, drawn up to ensure that alcoholic beverages are not designed or promoted to appeal to children and adolescents, and paying particular attention to implications of social, sexual or sporting success.

Opinion of the Youth Panel:

all 22 students think that the spot is attractive to their peers, 14 out of 22 believe that the advertisement may give the impression that drinking facilitates social relationships and contributes to social and sexual success.

Decision of Advertising Code Committee:

complaint rejected, since the visual and audible elements of the ad do not refer to the relation between alcohol and social facilitation of relationships. The key message conveyed, instead, is the spectacular effect of ice breaking (Eurocare Italia 2011).

Fourth example: Viru Beer (journal advertisement)

Opinion Youth Panel: this commercial is appealing to our peers.

Opinion Code Commission: no violation of the self-regulation code.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

The complaint was filed on the grounds that the ad bears implications of sexual success, which is in breach with the self-regulation code.

Opinion of the Youth Panel:

25 out of 30 students consider the image in the picture as appealing to their peers. Furthermore, 21 students think that the image refers to sex; 26 believe that the reference to sex is an attractive topic for their peers, and 27 think that the sexual references found in this spot are attractive to their peers.



Decision of the Advertising Standards Committee (IAP):

rejected. Although the Committee expresses doubts on the appropriateness of using this sort of images, it does not recognize any violation of the code (Eurocare Italia 2010).

5.6 Reviewing self-regulation in the Netherlands

5.6.1 Submitted complaints on alcohol advertising in the Netherlands

In 2010, STAP filed a total of 76 complaints about alcohol advertising with the Advertising Code In 2010, STAP filed a total of 76 complaints about alcohol advertising with the Advertising Code Committee. A total of 49 complaints have been filed about the 16 advertising practices used in the AMMIE project. The main themes of the complaints were on substantive problems, such as minors, stimulation of excessive drinking and social, sexual or sportive success. Of the 49 complaints, 5 were upheld by the Committee, and 44 were not upheld.

STAP selected 20 (sub)complaints to present to the Youth Rating Panel. The panel consisted of 37 young people. According to STAP, these particular ads were the most interesting in asking the opinion of minors.

Table 16: Subject, number, and outcome of complaints about alcohol advertisements in the Netherlands (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of advertisements	Number of (sub)complaints	Not upheld	Upheld
Attractive to young people		17	16	1
Stimulates excessive alcohol consumption		7	6	1
Suggests social, sexual or sportive success		10	10	
Other (e.g. too young depictions)		15	12	3
Total	16	49	44	5

Table 17: Rejected complaints: decisions of the Advertising Code Committee sorted by subject, compared to the opinion of the Youth Panel in the Netherlands (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of sub complaints rejected by the Committee (not upheld)	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to young people	11	11	
Stimulates excessive alcohol consumption	6	1	5
Suggests social, sexual or sportive success	7	4	3
Total	24	16	8

Table 18: Accepted complaints: decisions of the Advertising Code Committee sorted by subject, compared to the opinion of the Youth Panel in the Netherlands (2010)

Theme of the complaint	Number of sub complaints upheld by the Committee	View of the Youth Panel differs from Committee (disagree)	View of the Youth Panel matches the Committee
Attractive to young people	3		3
Stimulates excessive alcohol consumption	1		1
Suggests social, sexual or sportive success			
Total	4		4

In summary: opinion of the Youth Panel versus those of the Advertising Standards Committee:

Of the 28 (sub) complaints that were presented to the Youth Panel:

- The young people disagreed with the Committee on all the rejected complaints about the attractiveness to young people (11 times).
- In almost all cases, the young people disagreed with the Committee on rejected complaints concerning the supposed encouragement of excessive drinking.
- The young people varied in agreement with the Committee on complaints concerning social, sexual, or athletic success as a result of alcohol consumption.
- Concerning the complaints that were accepted (2 times), the youngster agreed with the Committee.

Conclusion of STAP:

It is clear that the Advertising Code Committee often judged the complaints regarding 'specifically targeting minors' as 'not upheld', while the Youth Rating Panel felt attracted to all of these advertising practices showed to them (including the ones upheld). Of the 14 complaints regarding minors, which were not upheld by the Committee, the Youth Rating Panel disagreed with 11 of the judgments and agreed three times.

The reason for this discordance seems to lie in the way some of the articles of the Advertising Code for Alcoholic beverages are formulated. Especially the articles with regard to the protection of minors are often 'interpreted too literally'. For example, according to article 10 of the ACA, an advertising practice may not specifically target minors. In practice, alcohol advertisements might not be *specifically* targeting *minors*, but a wider audience including adults. However, the Youth Rating Panel has clearly shown that, although the advertising might not be specifically targeted at them, it is still appealing to them.

So basically, the Committee can hardly be 'blamed' for denying most of the complaints, because they literally adhere to the Code. But precisely because of this literal adherence, hardly any alcohol advertising practice turns out to be *specifically* targeting minors. For this reason, this results in hardly any rejection of advertising practices based on article 10 of the Code.

Another example is the formulation of article 8 of the ACA, concerning social and sexual success. In this article, it is literally stated that advertising for alcoholic beverages shall not make the impression that there is a causal link between the consumption of alcoholic beverages and social or sexual success. The impression of this causal relation can also be invoked though the suggestion of alcohol consumption without the actual consumption of alcohol being displayed. Despite the fact that no causal relation is evoked or shown in alcohol advertising, often an obvious association is made between drinking an alcoholic beverage and social or sexual success. Because of the literal adherence to the Code, and because no *real* causal relation is depicted, every filed complaint in 2010, based on article 8, was rejected by the Committee. Finally, the same conclusion can be drawn regarding the complaints about sportive success (article 6.4). Because of the literal adherence to the Code, and due to the fact that no causal relation between the consumption of alcohol and sporting performance is depicted, every filed complaint in 2010 based on article 6.4 was rejected by the Committee.

5.6.2 Examples of questionable ads from the Netherlands (2010)

First example: Heineken (a colourful World Cup gadget also promoted in a TV-commercial)

Opinion Young People: this gadget is attractive to young people



Opinion Code Commission: this gadget is not specifically targeting young people
Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

The 'Pletterpet' is a plastic gadget, inspired by a South-African miner helmet, designed because of the World Championships football in South Africa..

The cap was available for sale in supermarkets when buying 8 cans of Heineken beer. Before one could use the Pletterpet, several parts had to be put together. Furthermore, the Pletterpet contains stickers, makes use of youth language, and has a design which is popular amongst youngsters. The Pletterpet was introduced and demonstrated in a special TV-commercial for the 2010 World Cup.

Opinion of the Youth Panel: according to a large majority of the questioned youngsters, the Pletterpet is attractive to their peers (27 out of 37), and more than half (21 out of 37) thought their peers would like to have this gadget.

Decision of the Advertising Code Committee: "Despite the fact that there are stickers in the package, one cannot say it is a product specifically targeting minors. The stickers are not specifically targeted at young people and only serve to decorate the object. Furthermore, the advertiser provided sufficient evidence that the word 'to pimp' and the sentence 'pimp your Pletterpet' is not youth language as defined in the Code guidelines. Nor does the Committee believe that the Pletterpet is designed in a way that is specifically targeting young people." (STAP 2011)

Second example: Malibu- Special edition bottle

Opinion Young People: this advertisement is appealing to our peers.

Opinion Code Commission: this advertisement is not specifically targeted at minors
Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

in 2010, Malibu launched a special edition bottle called: "Malibu By U". In this case, you buy a white bottle of Malibu and receive four markers in the colours yellow, blue, black, and orange. The aim is to 'pimp' or to 'customize' this bottle and to create your own coloured Malibu bottle. As especially youngsters would feel attracted to this action of Malibu, STAP expected that Malibu was specifically targeting minors.

Opinion Youth Panel:

the advertisement is attractive to our peers (28 out of 37). Especially the images (24 out of 37) and the language used, such as 'pimping' and 'customize' (25 out of 37), are judged to be attractive to minors.



More than half of the youngsters think the advertisement is created to appeal to children and young people (24 out of 37).

Decision of the Code Committee:

“The fact that the Malibu bottle can be designed to your own liking by use of the markers included, does not mean it is specifically targeted at minors” (STAP; 2001).

Quote one of the youngsters: *“It seems attractive to children (drawing), while they are advertising for alcohol which is for people above 16 years, this is confusing.”*

Third example: Bacardi Island (TV and cinema commercial)

Youth Panel: the commercial is appealing to us, is related to social success but does not stimulate us to drink excessively.

Code Committee: ‘There is nothing wrong with this commercial’.

Complaint rejected



Reason for the complaint:

The commercial shows dozens of boats with young, popular people setting out to a point at sea where they create an island with big stones, which are thrown from the vessels. The commercial gives the impression that the people on the island are drinking and partying the entire night with the boxes of Bacardi rum they brought. The only thing that is available for the people on the island is Bacardi rum. Also, men and women are dancing erotically with each other on the party.



Opinion of the Youth Panel:

21 out of 37 youngsters answered ‘yes’ to the question whether they think their peers would have more social success when drinking Bacardi. The youngsters (20 of 37) do not think that the commercial stimulates them to drink alcohol. A large majority of the youngsters thinks that this commercial is attractive to their peers (33 out of 37); especially the party element (35 out of 37), the images used (35 out of 37), the language (25 out of 37), the music (33 out of 37) and the styles which fit youth culture (29 out of 37). Nevertheless, the youngsters do not think the commercial is specifically targeted at them (25 out of 37).

Decision of the Advertising Code Committee:

the number of bottles of Bacardi rum does not suggest excessive or irresponsible drinking. Nor can it be held that the impression of a causal relation between consumption of alcoholic beverages and sexual / social success is given. Moreover, dancing people are not identified as social or sexual success (STAP; 2011).

Fourth example: Jupiler- The Gathering (TV commercial)

Youth Panel: The relation between drinking and sportive success is not clear but the advertisement is attractive to our peers

Advertising Committee: no proof of a suggested relation between drinking and sportive success.

Complaint rejected

Reason for the complaint:

The Jupiler commercial shows how a couple of (male) friends are practicing several sports activities in the mountains. During the canoe trip, a net of approximately 9 or 10 cans of Jupiler is shown (see illustration). The



men are shown playing football until it gets dark. During the football match the men are drinking Jupiler beer.

According to STAP, it is suggested that the men play better thanks to drinking Jupiler, whether or not this is really the case. After all, Jupiler has been consumed while playing football. For this reason, STAP believed the commercial to be in breach which the Code.



Opinion of the Youth Panel:

the youngsters agree with the opinion of the Committee that the commercial does not show an activity which can be done better by drinking alcohol (31 out of 37). The majority thinks the commercial is appealing to their peers (25 out of 37).

Decision of the Advertising Code Committee: “Practically, no alcohol has been consumed before or during the sport activities, and for this reason the commercial is not in breach with the Code (STAP, 2001).

6. AMMIE: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. To appeal or not to appeal: introduction of the AMMIE project

The report 'To appeal or not to appeal' is a result of the AMMIE project that aims to provide insight into the functioning of existing regulations on alcohol advertising in a number of countries in Europe. It also aims to answer the question whether alcohol advertisers adhere to the rules. This is done by the systematic monitoring of alcohol advertising in 2010 by five NGO's in five countries: Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands. To monitor alcohol advertising, AMMIE makes use of the extensive experience gained in the Netherlands. This form of monitoring is conducted in the Netherlands since 2002 by the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy (STAP), commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Much of the regulation of alcohol advertising has been created and is enforced by the alcohol industry itself and is therefore called self-regulation. In practice, most evaluations of these regulations are done exclusively by commercial parties and are therefore not independent. In 2010, the five NGO's selected 84 alcohol marketing practices that seemed to be in violation with the existing national rules for self-regulation. The next step was to file complaints against these practices with the national Alcohol Advertising Committees, who are to decide whether these complaints were upheld or not.

The following step in the project was to ask the five Youth Rating Panels from the five participating countries to give their opinions about a selection of the complaints. One of the questions was: *Do you think these advertisements are attractive to your peers?* The answers on these and other questions about these ads were compared with the decisions of the Advertising Code Committees.

This report presents a collective overview of the results of these procedures and an overview of the project results of the five participating countries. An even more detailed description can be found in the five separate national reports published by the five NGO's that participated in the AMMIE project: Foundation 'Horizonti 21', Bulgaria; Danish Alcohol Policy Network / Alkoholpolitisk Landsraad, Denmark; German Centre for Addiction Issues (DHS), Germany; Eurocare Italia, Italy; Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy, The Netherlands.

6.2. Conclusions of the AMMIE project

1. Many complaints about advertisements were rejected

In 2010, many advertisements in the five participating countries were detected to give rise to complaints filed for a number of reasons (a total of 199 complaints against 84 advertisements), the most complaints (72%) were not upheld, but a substantial part of complaints (23%) were upheld by the Advertising Code Committees of the self-regulation and in some cases the statutory advertising

system. It seems remarkable in this respect that no significant differences between the participating countries have been found.

2. Advertising Code Committees accept relatively large amounts of alcohol advertising practices which are appealing to young people

In many occasions, young people (aged 12-18 years) from the five participating countries had an opinion that was in sharp contrast with the opinion of the Advertising Code Committee for self-regulation. Most often, this concerned the theme of advertising appealing to young people. When watching the commercials young people often noted that: "This advertisement is attractive to our peers."

The (almost) standard answer of the Advertising Code Committee always was: "This advertising campaign is probably attractive to young people but it is not shown to be specifically aimed at them, adults find the advertisement attractive as well". Subsequently, the complaint was not upheld because of these arguments. The conclusion is that many alcohol advertisements that attract young people were not in violation with the existing national self-regulation of alcohol advertising.

3. Many alcohol advertisements contain features from youth culture

In the alcohol ads that were assessed in all countries, features were found (animations, music, colours, etc.) that, according to the partners, are style elements of youth culture. These elements make advertising appealing to young people. Thus, many alcohol advertisements were found to be in breach with the recommendations of the Council Recommendations (2001). Also, televised advertising was found to violate the provisions of Article 15 of the Audio Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD).

4. Humour is an attractive style element to young people, but that element is not addressed in self-regulatory codes

Humour plays an important role in many advertising campaigns. According to the partners of the project, humour makes alcohol advertising more attractive to young people. This is also confirmed by scientific studies (Chen et al 2005). Rules concerning the style of humour are, however, not included in the advertising codes of the self-regulation. For this reason, complaints based on the occurrence of the element of humour can not be accepted by the Advertising Code Committee and are therefore systematically rejected.

5. Many advertisements are, judging by the views of the Youth Panels, in breach with the Council Recommendation and AVMSD

Many alcohol advertisements that were broadcasted in the five participating countries in 2010 are, based on the opinion of the Youth Panels, attractive to youth. Consequently, this conclusion means that these advertisements are in conflict with the advice of the Council Recommendation (2001) and in breach with the Directive AVMSD.

6. The formulation of the self-regulation articles is clever and precise; complaints are therefore easily rejected

The existing national and European regulations on the content of alcohol advertising do not adequately protect young people. The exact reason is that these regulations are clever and precisely formulated. As a result of this, in many cases there is an easy way to reject a complaint.

Two examples:

- The existing rule that alcohol advertising may not specifically be aimed at young people leaves the freedom for advertising appealing to young people as well as adults.
- The existing rule that alcohol advertising should not suggest that alcohol use leads to social, sexual or sportive success leaves ample space for advertising where alcohol is clearly associated with these types of success as long as no causal relationship is shown. Complaints about such advertisements will only be upheld if it is visible that the use of alcohol literally precedes success.

7. Acceptance of self-regulation in Europe contributes to alcohol use among children and youngsters

The differences in opinion between the Youth Panels and the Advertising Code Committees again lead to the conclusion that self-regulation for alcohol advertising does not work. Self-regulation has been proved insufficient in Western countries as: Australia (Jones & Donovan 2002, Jones et al 2008), the Netherlands (VanDalen & Kuunders 2003); the United Kingdom (KPMG 2008, Hastings et al 2010); the United States (Gomes & Simon, 2008); and Brazil (Vendrame & Pinsky 2010). Public health experts increasingly advocate a comprehensive ban on alcohol marketing (Anderson 2009, Ormsby, 2009 <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE58735A20090908>). The broad acceptance of self-regulation of alcohol advertising by the European Union and its Member States contributes in promoting alcohol use among children and adolescents.

6.3. Recommendations of the AMMIE project

1. Based on the findings of the AMMIE project, it is recommended that the existing regulations as part of self-regulation regarding the content of alcohol advertising should be reviewed. It is recommended that the necessary revision of the regulations of self-regulation should be carried out by an independent commission. Previous adaptations of the self-regulation codes were not executed independently. Also, they were announced as improvements (in order to protect young people) but in practice led to more possibilities for the advertisers.
2. To avoid confusing and erroneous interpretation of the articles of the self-regulating code, the starting point should be the formulation of what content of alcohol advertising is permitted rather than what is not allowed. This should be formulated precisely and unambiguously.
3. The Council of Europe should formulate a new recommendation as a successor to the Council Recommendation of 2001. The recommendations from 2001 are insufficiently protective for young

people because their wording leaves room for alcohol advertising that children and adolescents find attractive and thus stimulates their alcohol use.

4. The text of Article 15 of the Directive AVMSD should be revised, as the current wording of this article leaves room for alcohol advertising that children and adolescents find attractive.

5. The enhancement of the content of alcohol advertising should be carried out in accordance with the report: Effective Alcohol Marketing Regulations, part of the FASE Project (STAP 2010). Elements from this report are:

-Alcohol advertisements should be evaluated according to young people's interpretation and not according to the intention of the advertiser.

-Content restrictions should address all elements that prove to be appealing to young people (e.g. lifestyle images, humour).

-Content restrictions should limit advertisements that young people find appealing, even if these are not specifically targeting minors or are specifically appealing to minors (but to adults as well).

Note: In the US this is regulated differently. The Federal Trade Commission in the US Recommends that the content restrictions should be raised by prohibiting ads "with Substantial appeal to underage consumers, even if they also appeal to adults, or by targeting ads to persons 25 year and older" (FTC 2008).

6. In every Member State of the European Commission, the amount and nature of alcohol advertising should be monitored by an independent organization. It should not only consider whether the advertising is compliant, but also periodically assess the impact of advertising on the drinking behaviour of vulnerable groups, including young people.

7. Effective regulation of alcohol advertising covers both the content and the volume of alcohol advertising. For recommendations on the adjustment of the volume of alcohol advertising, see the AMMIE reports about the volume of alcohol marketing (www.eucam.info/eucam/home/ammie-volume.html) .

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