**European directives**

Excise duties for alcohol are regulated through two main pieces of EU legislation.

[Directive 92/83/EEC](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31992L0083:en:HTML) sets out the structures of excise duties on alcohol and alcoholic beverages, the categories of alcohol and alcoholic beverages subject to excise duty, and the basis on which the excise duty is calculated. It also includes special provisions, for example, reduced rates for small breweries and distilleries, certain products and geographical regions.

[Directive 92/84/EEC](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31992L0084:en:HTML) sets out the minimum rates that must apply to each category of alcoholic beverage. It also provides for reduced rates for certain Greek departments and islands, certain regions of Italy, and for Madeira and the Azores in Portugal.

**Consultation**

On 28 August 2015 the Commission launched a [public consultation](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2015_alcohol_en.htm) on the evaluation of the Directive (92/83/EEC).The consultation is part of the Commission's ['Better Regulation'](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/index_en.htm) agenda.

The consultation invites consumer groups, alcohol producers, retailers and other interested parties to give their views on a broad range of issues, such as the possible effects of establishing exemptions and common reduced rates, particularly for small producers of alcoholic beverages and home-brewers. It also aims to find out whether EU consumers are properly informed about what they are drinking: for instance, whether discount alcohol is more likely to be counterfeit, and as importantly whether it contains harmful chemicals.

**Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy STAP**

STAP recently decided to contribute to this consultation. In the view of STAP the current classification of alcoholic beverages in the categories is very unclear, from the time that there was only beer, wine and strong spirits. The categorization causes problems with mixed drinks and other new beverages that have come on the market. STAP also believes that it is from health point of view undesirable that small and home producers of alcohol get simpler rules and reduced excise duties.

STAP advices the Commission to move towards a system with progressive tax rates based on the alcohol content of the beverage. Choosing for a progressive tax rate, means in practice means that the effective tax pressure gradually increases the higher the alcohol content of the beverage, regardless the manner the product is produced.