

**PRESS RELEASE**

*Brussels, Belgium, 2 September 2014*

**DOCTORS TAKE BATTLE TO IMPLEMENT “SCOTLAND THE BRAVE’S” ALCOHOL MINIMUM UNIT PRICE POLICY TO BRUSSELS**

The Scottish health professions are increasing their efforts to challenge the continued opposition by global alcohol producers to the implementation of Scotland’s Alcohol Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) policy. On 5th September in Brussels, Scottish and European doctors will make the case for health alongside industry supporters of the policy, including C & C Group (producers of Tennents Lager) and the Scottish Licensed Trade Association.

Legislation to introduce a Minimum Unit Price of 50p was passed without opposition by the Scottish Parliament in May 2012. The legislation has yet to come into force because a consortium of global alcohol producers, fronted by the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA), Spirits Europe and the Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins (CEEV) is fighting its implementation every step of the way. The fight is now in Europe where, in the latest stage of the legal battle, written opinions from EU member states may be made to the European Court, with the deadline for this being mid-October this year.

Dr Peter Rice, Chair of SHAAP (Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems) said:

“Changes in the price of alcohol are a key determinant in rates of alcohol harm. This vitally important health policy will save Scottish lives and it needs to be implemented as a matter of urgency. In Canada, a 10% increase in average minimum price was associated with a 32% drop in alcohol death rates. MUP is within the competence of the Scottish Government to implement as an appropriate Public Health response to a Health crisis.”

Mariann Skar, Secretary General, European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare) said:

“Minimum Unit Price (MUP) is an evidence based intervention to address alcohol related harm in Scotland. This policy will make a difference, and Eurocare are now urging Member States and the Commission to give their support for the implementation of the MUP to protect their citizen’s well-being.”

Emma Woodford, Interim Secretary General of the European Public Health Alliance added:

“This seminar is a prime example of how industry and advocates can work together to achieve goals aimed at reducing alcohol related harm in Europe. Minimum Unit Pricing can only serve to save lives and EPHA is in full support of this crucial policy being implemented in Scotland.”



Eric Carlin, Director of SHAAP (Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems) said:

“We need other member states and the Commission to support or at least not oppose the Scottish policy. MUP is opposed by a consortium of multi-national alcohol producers who, inaccurately, are framing this as a Health v Industry issue. Demonstrating the falseness of this claim, we have speakers from the Scottish alcohol industry who support this policy from an ethical position.”

Paul Waterson, Chief Executive of the Scottish Licensed Trade Association said:

“The SLTA is delighted to be involved in this very important seminar exploring Scotland’s innovative Alcohol Policies. We fully support the most inventive of these, Minimum Unit Pricing, and believe it to be a crucial element in trying to change Scotland’s uneasy relationship with alcohol.”

Dr Katrin Fjeldsted, President of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) commented:

“Alongside the World Health Organisation, the CPME strongly advocates a “health in all policies” approach to prevent disease and improve health. This includes consideration of health effects in trade policies and this is the reason we have supported the Scottish efforts to introduce a Minimum Unit Price for alcohol in Scotland.

This is an opportunity for the European Union to support an innovative health improvement measure, designed for local circumstances, supported by the international evidence and to show that in Europe, health comes first.”

**###ENDS###**

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**Further information:**

- Minimum Unit Pricing: Key facts (one page): <http://www.shaap.org.uk/minimum-pricing-for-alcohol.html>
- Registration for “Scotland the Brave: Alcohol Policy in Scotland” seminar in Brussels on 5th September: <http://my.eurocare.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=19&>
- Sign the online Declaration of support: <http://www.shaap.org.uk/support-mupsaveslives.html>

**SHAAP (Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems)** is an independent medical advocacy organisation set up, by the Scottish Medical Royal Colleges, to raise awareness of the nature and extent of harm linked to alcohol use in Scotland, and to campaign for evidence-based measures to reduce this harm: [www.shaap.org.uk](http://www.shaap.org.uk)

**European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare)** is an alliance of non-governmental public health and social organisations advocating the prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm in Europe. Eurocare is based in Brussels and have 57 member organisations from 25 European countries: [www.eurocare.org](http://www.eurocare.org)

**The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)** is the European Platform bringing together public health organisations representing health professionals, patients groups, health promotion and disease specific NGOs, academic groupings and other health associations: [www.ephah.org](http://www.ephah.org)

**The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)** aims to promote the highest standards of medical training and medical practice in order to achieve the highest quality of health care for all patients in Europe: <http://www.cpme.eu/>

**The Scottish Licensed Trade Association** is the only national organisation which represents all sectors of the Scottish Licensed Trade Industry. Members of the Association include publicans, hoteliers, restaurateurs, late night entertainment venues, clubs, and licensed grocers: <http://www.theslta.co.uk/>