



Press release

Youth fight for stronger alcohol regulations

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Riga, Latvia. Swedish and Latvian young people are gathering this weekend to advocate for stronger political action against the growing issue of alcohol abuse among their generation.

With many youth often being seen as one of society's problems, these young people are breaking stereotypes and involving themselves in one of the greatest issues facing their generation.

As part of the Democracy is Dialogue project, which is run by the European youth organisation, *Active – sobriety, friendship and peace*, the participants from Latvia have met with Members of the European Parliament, Commissioners and other various policy makers to bring the issue of youth alcohol abuse to the table.

The group of students from the Latvian organisation *LUAVIV* have put together a campaign to [increase the legal age of purchasing alcohol up to 21](#), which has gathered 1,186 supporters, and have published various [additional comments and proposals](#) to government legislation.

“Being young is often an advantage in these issues”, says Davis Toliašvili, who studies public relations at the Latvian Culture College. “Sometimes we can better understand the factors which urge youth to consume more alcohol far better than a policy maker because we are faced with the reality of it every day.”

The increase of alcohol consumption among young people is leading to a growing hangover throughout society. Alcohol intoxication can predict school dropouts and further more is linked to 50% of all teen automobile accidents in Europe. Alcohol related injuries and accidents also are the leading cause of death of young people throughout Europe.

“Behind all the statistics, though”, comments Stefan Slooten, Political Officer at Active, “are governmental policies which favour higher consumption levels”.

In Latvia, like many European countries, alcohol is affordable, readily available (in both markets and often illegally to minors) and can be marketed in almost any place which can be viewed by young people.

For these reasons, Europe consumes the highest amount of alcohol per capita around the world, leading to annual costs of 270 billion EUR (190 billion LVL) to the EU to repair the economic and social damages.

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