



UNGDOMENS NYKTERHETSFÖRBUND

PRESS RELEASE

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Easy for minors to buy alcohol in European Union Copenhagen's bars willingly sold alcohol to 15-year old Swedes

The work of young members of UNF, The Swedish Youth Temperance Association, reveals the actual strength of actions by the alcohol industry in the European Alcohol and Health Forum. Young UNF members from Sweden's border regions to Denmark went to Copenhagen to conduct mystery shopping and the results give a clear signal: of in total 7 tested bars and pubs, Swedish minors were without problems able to buy alcohol 11 times. 4 out of these 7 places are part of a project of City of Copenhagen and the alcohol industry.

The City of Copenhagen runs a project, called "tryg den af" (engl.: "Have fun. Be safe") together with the alcohol industry for responsible selling and serving. It is about certified bars and pubs that take responsibility for not selling alcohol to youth under the age of 18. How responsible selling and serving really is in Copenhagen was now revealed by UNF members.

"It is worrying how easy accessible alcohol is, not only for Danish youth but even for all young Swedes and other Europeans who regularly travel to Copenhagen. We are especially disappointed about those pubs and bars that say they would take social responsibility. But their certification evidently turned out to be empty words. It is obvious that the alcohol industry's self-regulations do not work," says Joakim Book Jönsson, coordinator of the mystery shopping and Secretary of UNF Skåne.

The Swedish youth delivered yet another example of the poor compliance with legal age limits all over Europe. Already in November 2010 at the 7th EAHF plenary did we see a presentation of mystery shopping results from all around Europe showing that the alcohol industry falls short in respecting the legal age limits.

"For us these brand new results add to the picture that the alcohol industry uses the EAHF to promote itself as socially responsible. But the reality is obviously very different," says Kristina Sperkova, Secretary-General of Active – sobriety, friendship and peace.

The EAHF is a one pillar of the EU strategy to reduce alcohol related harm. As a matter of fact not long ago NGOs and public health experts had issued an Open Letter to the members of the EAHF calling upon the alcohol industry for real action: "There have been several positive outcomes of the Forum, in terms of discussions and reports produced. Furthermore, it has increased action and coordination among NGOs. However, the NGOs in the Forum feel that it could achieve a lot more if the economic operators had not been continuously trying to divert attention into unproductive areas. Most of the commitments made by the economic operators to the Forum are in the areas of education and information. Alcohol industry educational programs and information campaigns are often misguiding and use ambiguous terminology."

"The proverb 'all that glitters is not gold' certainly fits for the alcohol industry in the EAHF," summarizes Kristina Sperkova from Active. "Self regulation is evidently not working. Over the years evidence for that has been piling up. To reduce alcohol harm and to protect young people we need decision makers who step up now and take measures. We hope that the City of Copenhagen learns the lesson."



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UNF, The Swedish Youth Temperance Association, is Sweden's biggest youth organization working for a drugfree lifestyle. UNF has more than 7,500 members in 125 youth groups spread all over Sweden. UNF's vision is a democratic and solidaric world free from drugs. UNF is religiously and partipolitically independent.

Overview Mystery shopping results Copenhagen

Date: 03 April 2011

Place: Copenhagen City

Who: Joakim (19), Linus (17), Malin (15), Niklas (15)

- 7 tests in total
- 4 places part of Project: "Have fun, Be safe": Café Guldhornene, Maerkbar, Café Guldregn, Riesen Bar
- both 15-year olds bought alcohol 11 times in total
- 6 times they were able to buy alcohol in the places of the "Have fun, Be safe" project

Conclusions:

- 15-year olds bought strong alcohol without problems
- Project "Have fun, Be safe" of City of Copenhagen together with alcohol industry works insufficiently
- "harm reduction as method" is ineffective to enforce legal age limits
- Community safety not ensured
- Interesting & enjoyable nightlife environment "especially for youth" (according to project) should provide alcohol free environments, not youth free environments

Important: other evidence shows same results: legal age limits are weakly enforced in Copenhagen

www.metroxpress.dk/nyheder/butikkerne-blser-pa-alkoholreglerne/KObkcE%21IXhAtbN00i5Q/

"Active- sobriety, friendship and peace" is a non - governmental organisation gathering European youth temperance organisations working for a democratic diverse and peaceful world free from alcohol and other drugs where an individual can live up to her full potential. Active has more than 25 000 members in 26 European countries.