

Dear Senators,

Some further information on the effects of alcopop taxes in Europe can be found on pp. 386-388 of:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/doc/alcoholineu\\_chap9\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/doc/alcoholineu_chap9_en.pdf) (P. Anderson & B. Baumberg, *Alcohol in Europe*).

Otherwise, there are some papers on the relation of alcopop consumption to alcohol problems in youth samples in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe, generally finding no clear special relationship with problems or with early initiation. If you are interested in seeing these papers, let me know.

Robin Room

**From:** Robin Room

**Sent:** Wednesday, 11 June 2008 7:07 PM

**To:** 'community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au'

**Subject:** Studies of effects of European alcopops taxes

Dear Senators,

During my testimony today at the hearing on ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages, the Committee's Chair asked me to send any information I could find on the effects of increased taxes on alcopops in European countries on consumption of other alcoholic beverages.

I will inquire further into this with European colleagues. But in the meantime I have found on the web a report in German, comparing reports on drinking in samples of 12-25 year olds in 2004 and 2005, which can be found at

<http://www.bzga.de/?uid=bdeefe103f4a763d9bf6d9ee6952b6e3&id=Seite1417>, under "**Entwicklung des Alkoholkonsums bei Jugendlichen 2005**".

This was before and after the German tax on spirits-based alcopops was raised on 2 August 2004.

My German is limited. But the basic story is that there was an overall decrease in reported alcohol consumption between 2004 and 2005. Even when spirits-based alcopops are omitted from the calculation, the decrease was from 35.1 to 31.1 grams per week, or about 11%. When spirits-based alcopops are counted in, the decrease was almost 19% calculated by one method, and larger by another method.

Consumption of other spirits went up a little among women, but fell a little among men. Consumption of wine- and beer-based alcopops went up among men, but not among women. Average volume consumed fell for all other beverages.

Reported binge drinking fell a little among both men and women.

[Comment from RR: This is survey data, and subject to the limitations of telephone interviewing. Taken on its face, however, the reported changes seem to me to involve more than simple economic choices. The increase in the tax on spirits-based alcopops, and the public discussion about it, may have sent a signal which caused 12-25 year olds (or their parents) to rethink their drinking patterns in general.]

I hope this message is useful to the Committee. I will send a further message if my inquiries yield any more data (or my effort at translation above proves problematic).

With best wishes for the success of your investigation,

Robin Room