

## WFA's progress report on the Responsible Marketing Pact against minors' exposure to alcohol marketing

The **Responsible Marketing Pact** (RMP) against minors' exposure to alcohol marketing is a voluntary commitment by nine of Europe's leading alcohol producers – AB InBev, Bacardi, Brown-Forman, Carlsberg, Diageo, Heineken, Moët Hennessey, Pernod Ricard and The Coca-Cola Company – which together represent the majority of alcohol marketing spend in the EU.

**The goal is to reduce minors' exposure to alcohol marketing, limit the appeal of alcohol marketing to minors, and strive to ensure minors' digital media experience is free from alcohol ads. Recently, additional voluntary commitments were agreed as part of the RMP to limit the exposure of minors to alcohol marketing at sponsored events and ensure responsible influencer marketing practices.**

The nine members of the RMP have launched this voluntary initiative with the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), which acts as the secretariat for the initiative, co-ordinating meetings and commissioning regular studies and reports from independent third parties to assess how the voluntary commitments are operating in the context of each producer's business.

In line with the EU's approach to reducing alcohol-related harm, the RMP is a voluntary industry initiative to complement the existing EU legal framework with innovative best practices for responsible alcohol marketing communications that provide minors with an additional layer of protection. To date, the RMP is among **the most advanced responsible alcohol marketing initiative globally**. It enshrines guidelines on where alcohol ads should be placed, the content of ads (i.e., creative execution), puts forward best practices for digital media and responsible sponsorship, as well as how to deliver responsible influencer marketing.

The RMP member companies support the European Commission's Code of Conduct on responsible business and marketing practices and are committed to working towards the Code's objectives and targets, notably to the aspirational objective to reverse malnutrition and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the EU and the aspirational target of a food environment that makes it easier to choose healthy and sustainable diets.

The RMP is built on three pillars: eliminating the exposure of minors to alcohol advertising, guaranteeing ads are not appealing to minors and ensuring that social media profiles related to alcohol products have digital safeguards in place.

In line with the Terms of Reference of the EU's Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices, RMP signatories have freely committed to undergoing independent third-party compliance monitoring of the RMP commitments to assess how the voluntary commitments are operating in the context of each producer's business.

**Digital controls.** In 2024, a **compliance monitoring of the digital controls on social media and logged-in environments** (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X) as well as company websites was conducted. The monitoring was carried by the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA)<sup>1</sup> and **found that 95% of the profiles lived up to the RMP commitments**. This is a sharp increase from the 86% compliance rate in 2019, and meets the self-imposed ambition set by the CEOs of RMP signatories. The review covered seven European countries.<sup>2</sup>

**Ad content.** In 2022, EASA and independent research firm Nielsen monitored compliance of RMP members' alcohol ads against the RMP list of practices and techniques likely to be **disproportionately appealing to minors**. In addition to checking whether any element from the list is present, the reviewers also checked against a set of open questions to assess whether any further

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<sup>1</sup> The **European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA)** brings together national advertising self-regulatory organisations in Europe. Based in Brussels, EASA is the European voice for advertising self-regulation.

<sup>2</sup> Monitored in France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Poland and the Netherlands.

potential source of primary appeal was present in the ad. Paid ads on social media (Facebook and Instagram) were reviewed for the first time, as well as alcohol ads on TV and YouTube.

The results showed that:

- 99% of ads lived up to the aims of the creative execution guidance;
- 4 ads featured elements were flagged as sources of potential underage appeal.

The review was conducted by self-regulatory organisations (SROs) in six countries (Germany, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands and Spain) The self-regulation experts from the six SROs reviewed a sample of ads belonging to RMP members broadcast between 1 August and 30 November 2022. The ads were provided by Nielsen, a global media and marketing performance management company.

**Ad placement.** In addition to the above, Nielsen carried out an analysis on minors' exposure to online alcohol marketing, one of the three pillars of the RMP.<sup>3</sup> Using so called avatar technology, a methodology that mimics the real browsing behaviour of children online, Nielsen was able to estimate the probabilistic rate of online alcohol advertising exposure. The last exposure monitoring, conducted in 2021, demonstrated relatively low levels of online ad exposure to alcohol ads:

- **0.28%** of all ads seen online are for alcohol (all ages);
- A minor is served one alcohol ad per **1,936** websites visited;
- This would translate to a minor being served only one alcohol ad per **86 hours 9 mins** spent online.

Although these results are encouraging, RMP members remain committed to further progress in their work towards eliminating minors' exposure to alcohol marketing. **This is why additional voluntary commitments on sponsorship and influencer marketing were agreed as part of the RMP in June 2025.**

You can find more information on the commitment and monitoring reports on our dedicated website: <https://rmp.wfanet.org/>.

RMP members:



**About WFA:** The World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) is the voice of marketers worldwide, representing 90% of global marketing communications spend – over €800 billion per year. **WFA helps its members set standards for responsible marketing communications worldwide, and encourages leadership initiatives, which go beyond compliance with existing industry standards.** WFA signed the EU's Code of Conduct on 5 July 2021.

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<sup>3</sup> The Digital Avatar Project used four avatars (simulated consumer profiles) to track advertising activity across 12 markets, globally, in 2020 and 2021. Through the findings, Nielsen estimated the general pervasiveness of alcohol advertising, as well as the probabilistic rate of a minors' exposure to alcohol advertising. The study employed four simulated consumer profiles, also known as avatars: Child Under 12, Teenager 12-17, Adult and Neutral. The media universe was formulated as a mix of sites and YouTube channels popular with – and having content/genre affinity with – teen and child audiences, as well as generally top-ranking sites and channels, to achieve a simulation of the average browsing habits in each country. Only non-logged-in environments were covered by the study.