

# Alcohol Consumption and Prevention in the European Union

Excerpt from the  
Alcohol Atlas  
Germany 2022



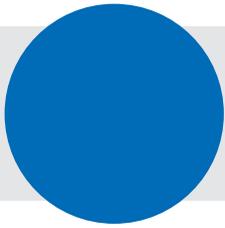
# Alcohol Consumption and Prevention in the European Union

## Excerpt from the Alcohol Atlas Germany 2022

Authors

Dr. Katrin Schaller | Dipl.-Biol. Sarah Kahnert | Dr. Rosa Garcia-Verdugo |  
Dr. Irina Treede | Laura Graen, M.A. | Dr. Nobila Ouédraogo

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# Imprint

Alcohol Consumption and Prevention in the European Union. Excerpt from the Alcohol Atlas Germany 2022

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## **Responsible for the Content**

German Cancer Research Center  
Unit Cancer Prevention and  
WHO Collaborating Centre for Tobacco Control

Dr. Katrin Schaller (head, comm.)

Im Neuenheimer Feld 280  
69120 Heidelberg  
Germany

[www.dkfz.de](http://www.dkfz.de)  
[www.tabakkontrolle.de](http://www.tabakkontrolle.de)  
[who-cc@dkfz.de](mailto:who-cc@dkfz.de)

## **Layout, Illustration, Typesetting**

Dipl.-Biol. Sarah Kahnert

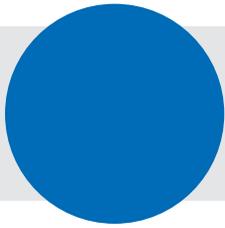
## **Cover**

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Alcohol Consumption in the European Union and its Consequences</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	Alcohol Consumption by Adults in the EU.....	2
1.2	Alcohol Consumption by Adolescents in the EU.....	4
1.3	Consequences of Alcohol Consumption in the EU.....	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Prevention of Alcohol Consumption in the European Union</b> .....	<b>9</b>
2.1	Pricing Policies in the EU.....	10
2.2	Restrictions on Supply and Availability in the EU.....	12
2.3	Advertising Restrictions in the EU.....	14
2.4	Legal Framework for Alcohol in Traffic in the EU.....	16
	<b>References and List of Figures</b> .....	<b>18</b>



# Alcohol Consumption in the European Union and its Consequences

1



# 1.1

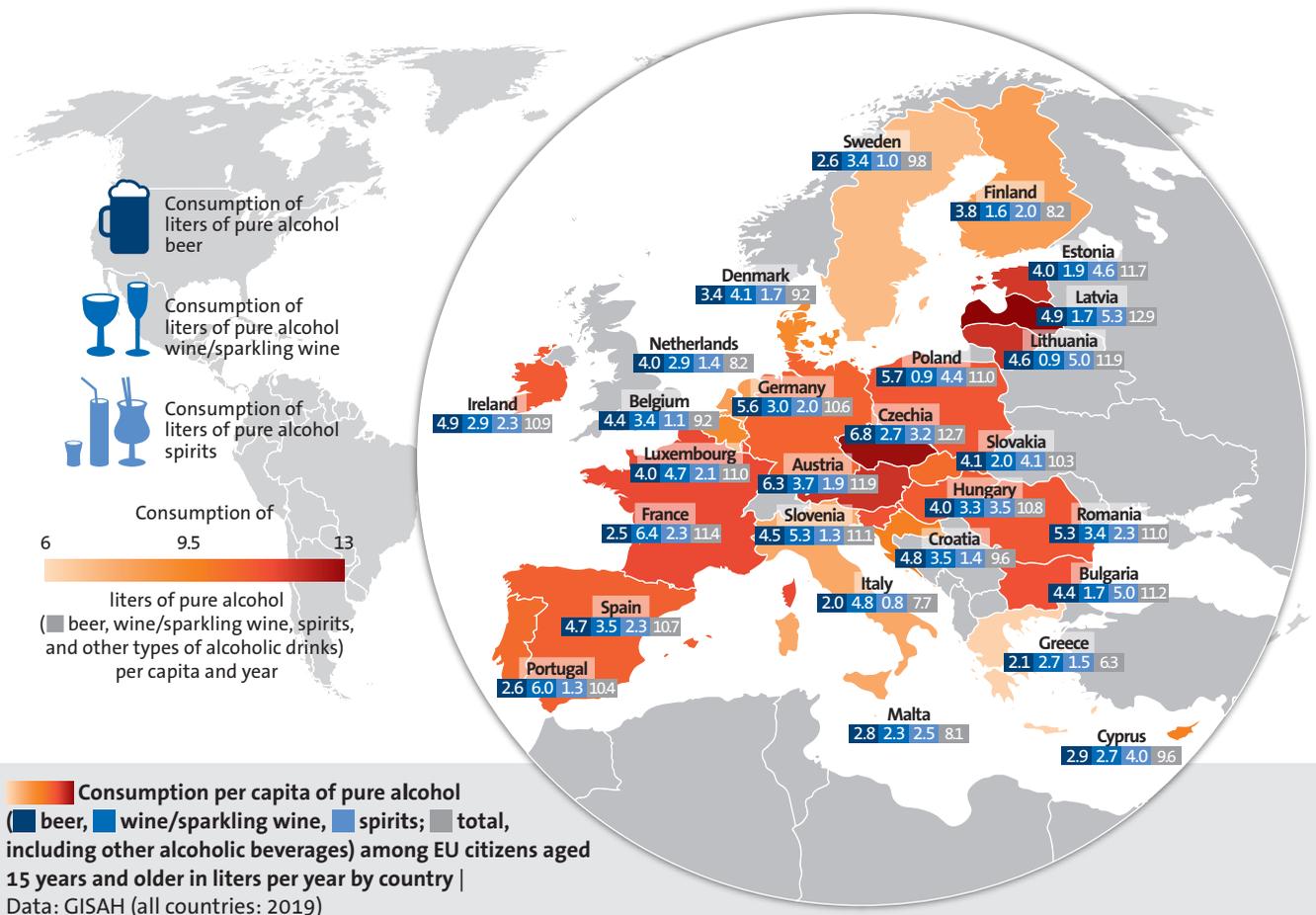
## Alcohol Consumption by Adults in the EU

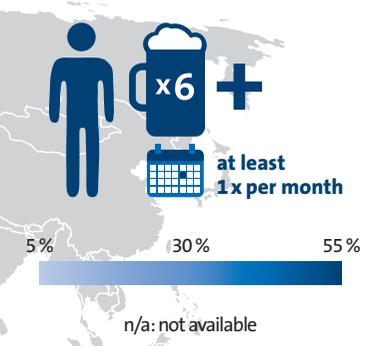
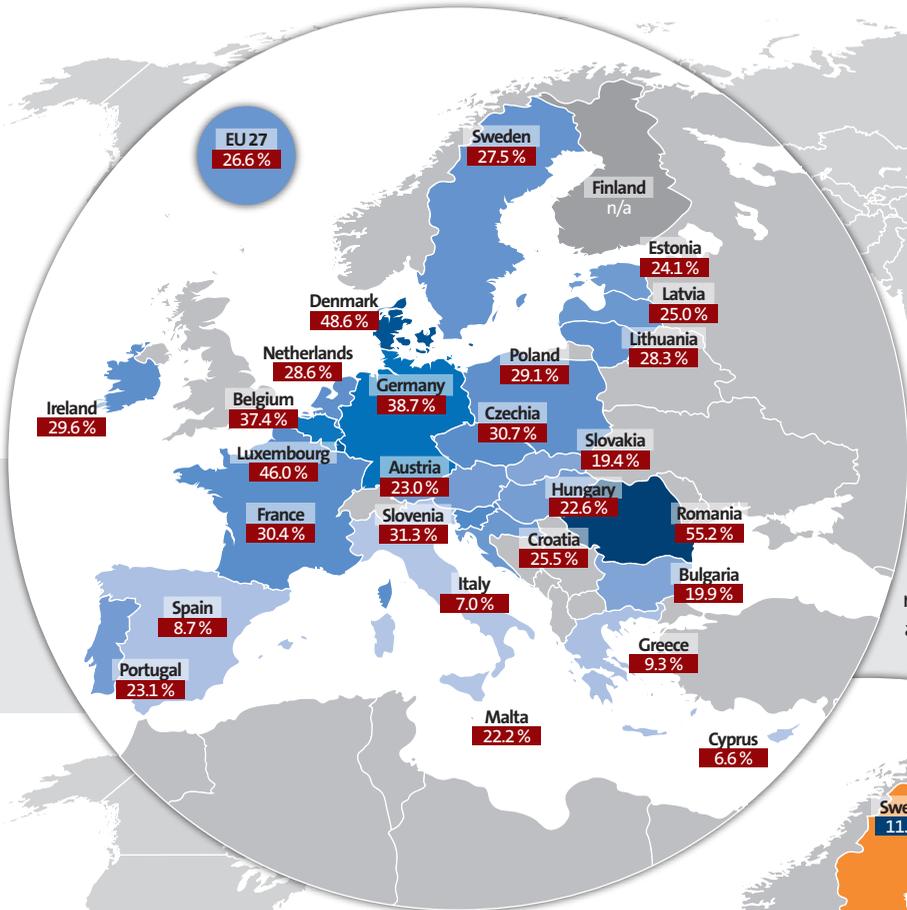
In 2021, Germany's annual pure alcohol consumption (10.6 liters per year) was slightly over the 10 liter average in the European Union (EU) | Latvia and the Czech Republic showed the highest annual consumption of pure alcohol per capita among people aged 15 and over, almost 13 liters per year. In contrast, Greece and Italy had the lowest, with less than 8 liters per year. Despite the decrease in consumption observed in many EU countries over the last 10 years, Europe is still the region with the highest alcohol consumption worldwide.

In terms of beer consumption, with 5.6 liters per capita, Germany ranks fourth after the Czech Republic, Austria and Poland | With respect to wine and spirits, Germany's consumption is

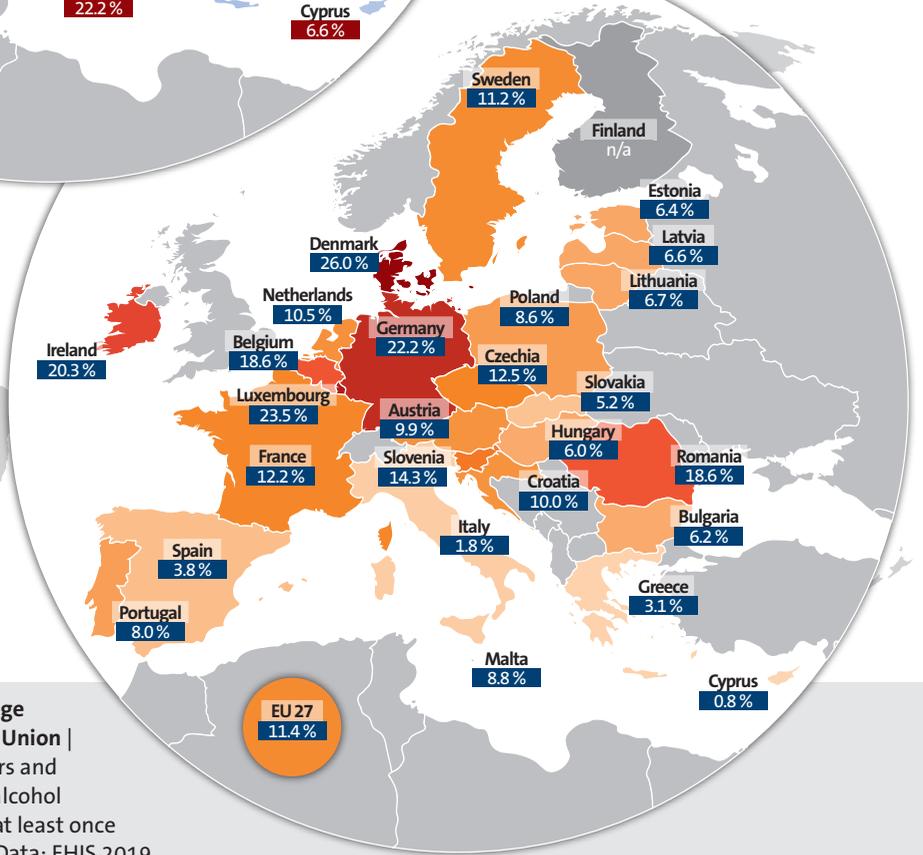
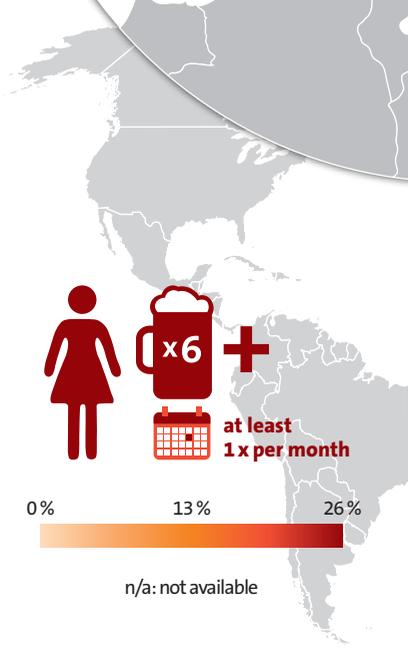
below the EU average, with three and two liters per capita and year in the population aged 15 and over, respectively.

**Binge drinking (six or more drinks on one occasion at least once a month), which is particularly harmful to health, is more widespread in Germany than the EU average** | In Germany, around 39 percent of men and 22 percent of women got drunk at least once a month in 2019. In contrast, in the EU, only about 27 percent of men and 11 percent of women on average did the same. Binge drinking is least common in Cyprus, Italy, Greece, and Spain, where less than 10 percent of men and women do it at least once a month.





**Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among men in the European Union** | Proportion of men aged 18 years and older consuming more than 60 grams of alcohol (six or more alcoholic beverages) at once at least once a month, by country | n/a: not available | Data: EHIS 2019



**Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among women in the European Union** | Proportion of women aged 18 years and older consuming more than 60 grams of alcohol (six or more alcoholic beverages) at once at least once a month, by country | n/a: not available | Data: EHIS 2019

# 1.2

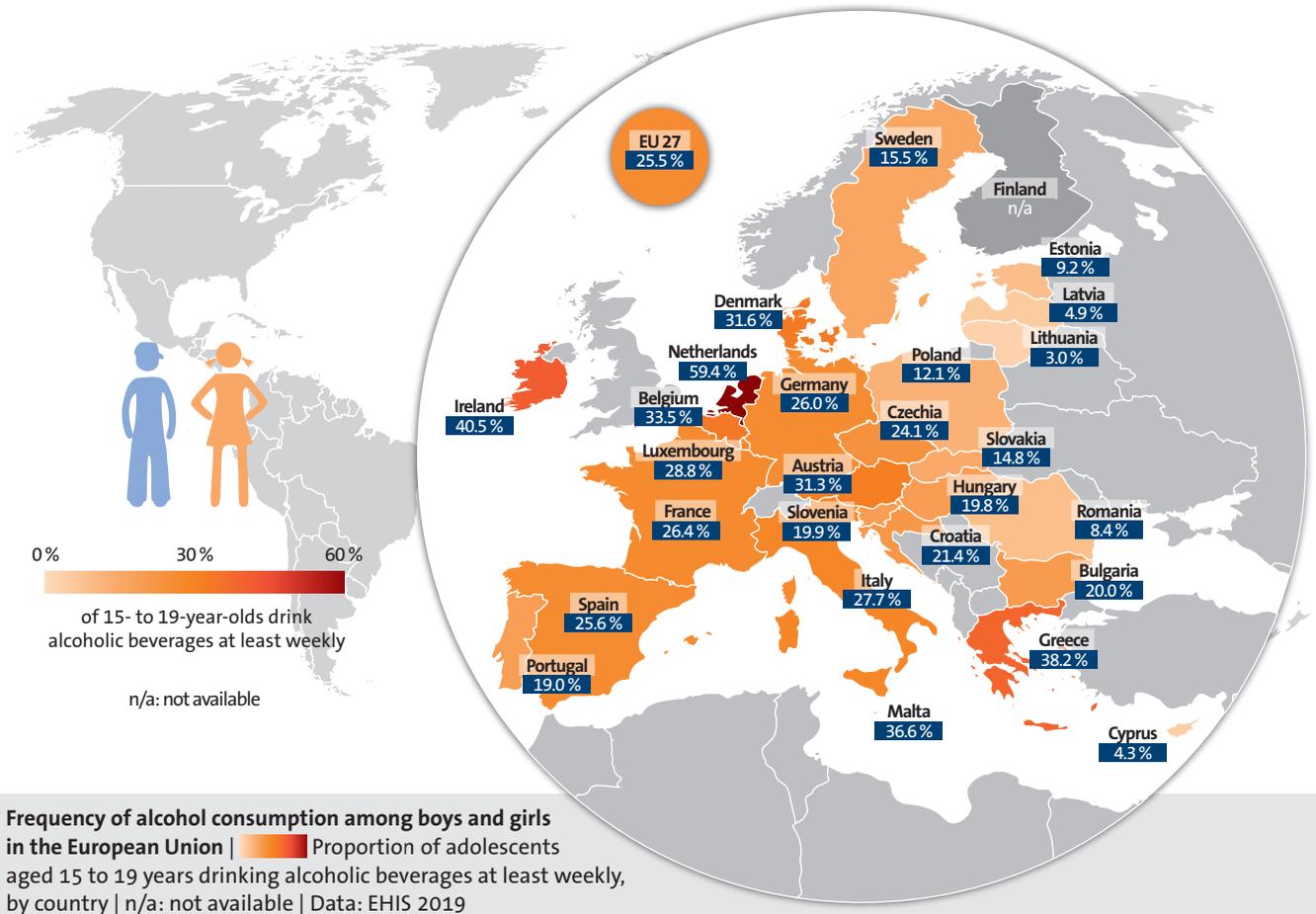
## Alcohol Consumption by Adolescents in the EU

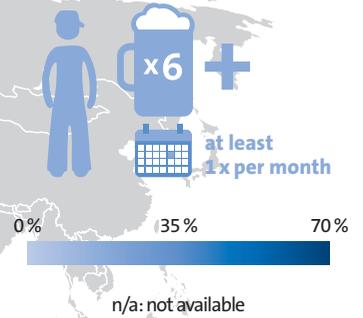
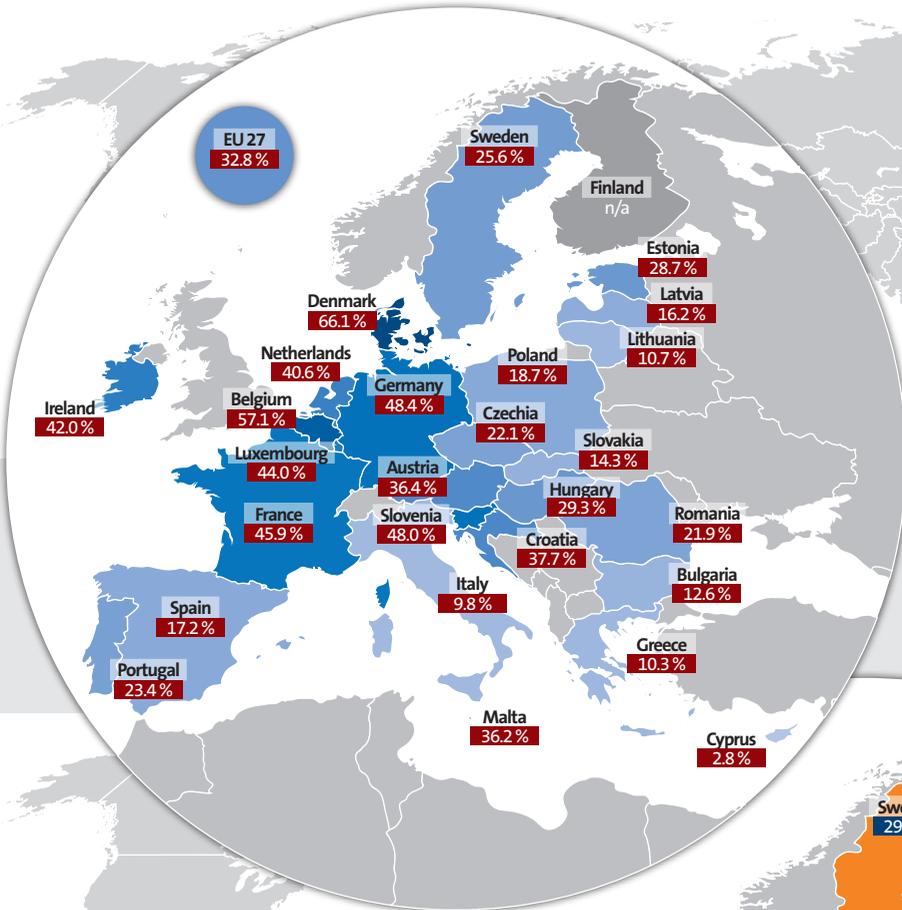
In the European Union (EU), on average, a quarter of all young people aged 15 to 19 drinks alcohol at least once a week | As in the rest of the EU, in Germany around 26 percent of young people aged 15 to 19 years drank alcohol on a weekly basis in 2019. In the Netherlands, the proportion of young people drinking alcohol is particularly high, at almost 60 percent. In contrast, Lithuania, Cyprus, and Latvia have the lowest prevalence of weekly alcohol consumption (less than five percent each).

With respect to binge drinking (six or more drinks on one occasion at least once a month), Germany is among the top positions behind Denmark and Belgium | In Germany, almost 46 percent

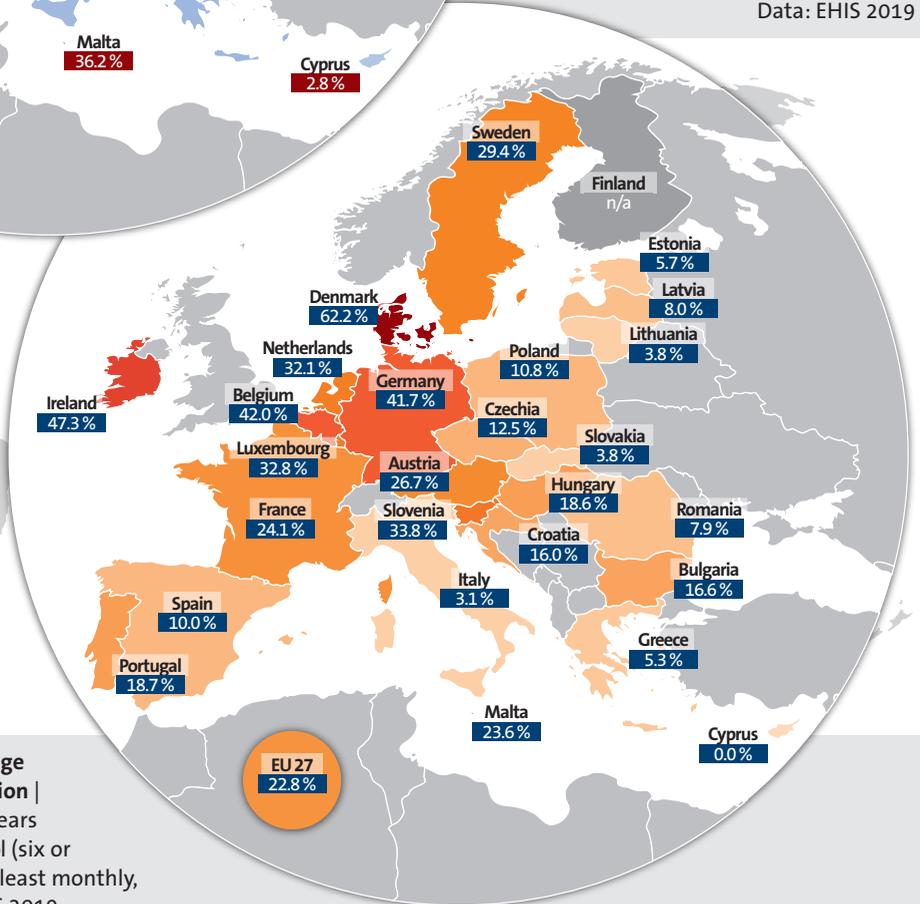
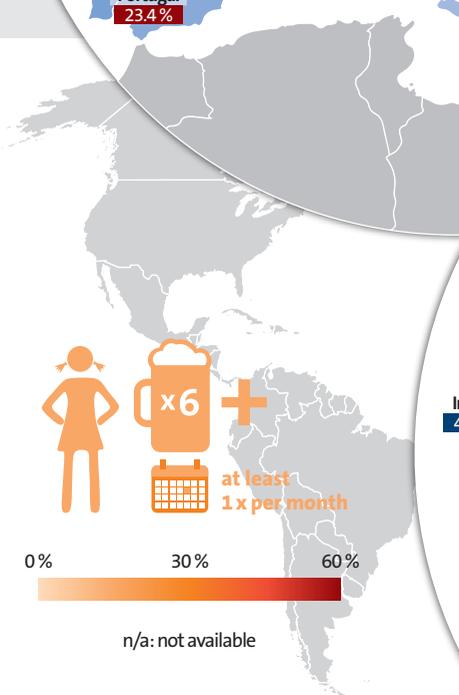
of young people aged 15 to 19 years (around 48 percent of boys and 42 percent of girls) drank till intoxication at least once a month in 2019. Meanwhile, only about 28 percent did it in the EU (about 33 percent of boys and 23 percent of girls). Monthly binge drinking is least common in Cyprus, involving only 1.7 percent of adolescents.

In almost all EU countries, both weekly and binge drinking are more common among boys than girls | In 2019, only in Ireland, Sweden, and Bulgaria was binge drinking at least once a month more common among girls than among boys.





**Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among boys in the European Union** | Proportion of boys aged 15 to 19 years consuming more than 60 grams of alcohol (six or more alcoholic beverages) on one occasion at least monthly, by country | n/a: not available | Data: EHIS 2019



**Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among girls in the European Union** | Proportion of girls aged 15 to 19 years consuming more than 60 grams of alcohol (six or more alcoholic drinks) on one occasion at least monthly, by country | n/a: not available | Data: EHIS 2019

# 1.3

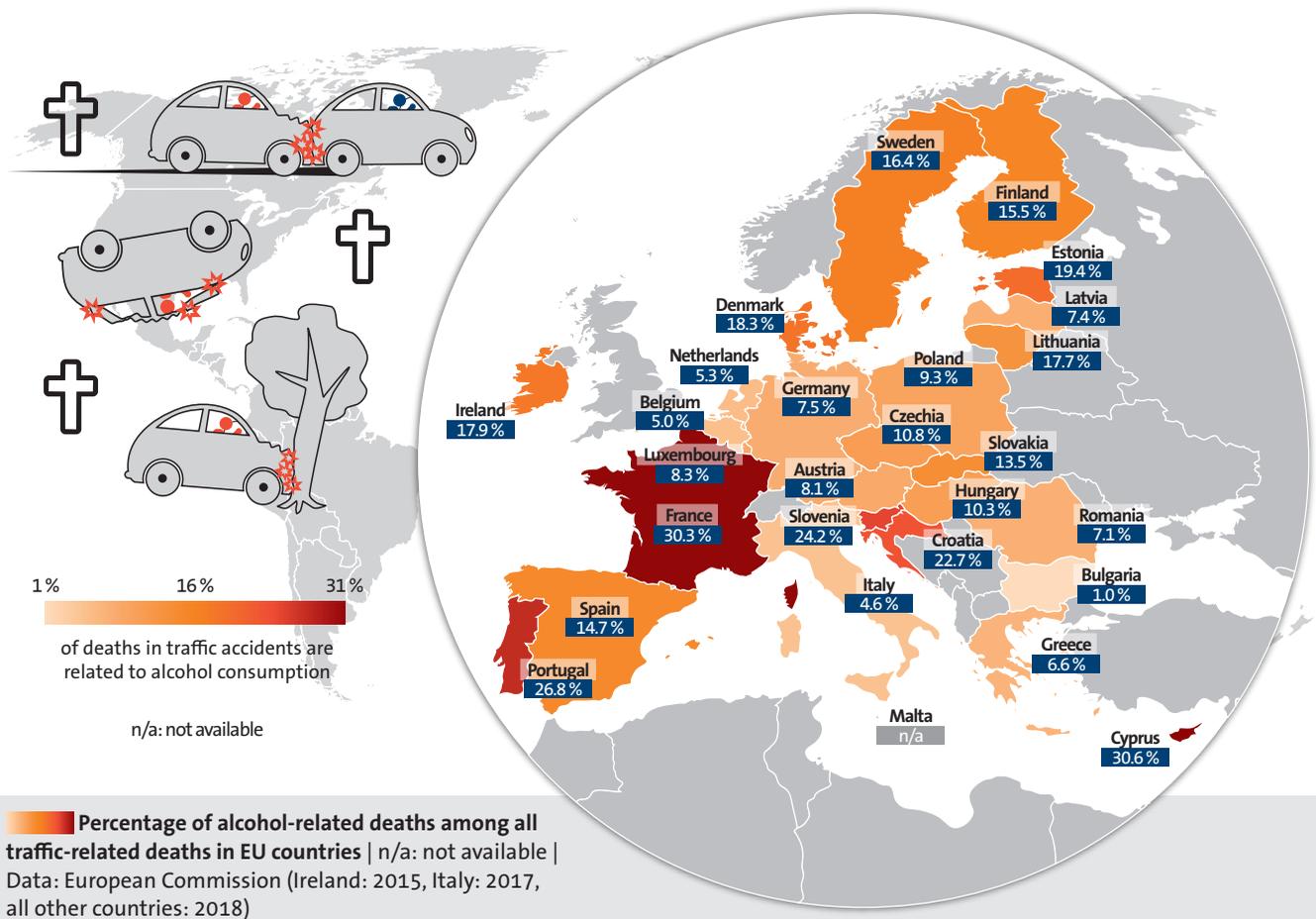
## Consequences of Alcohol Consumption in the EU

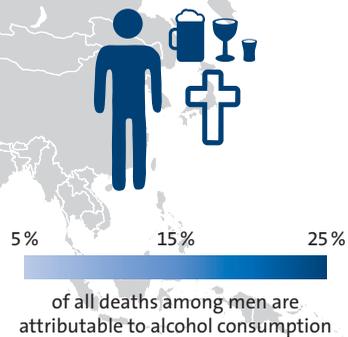
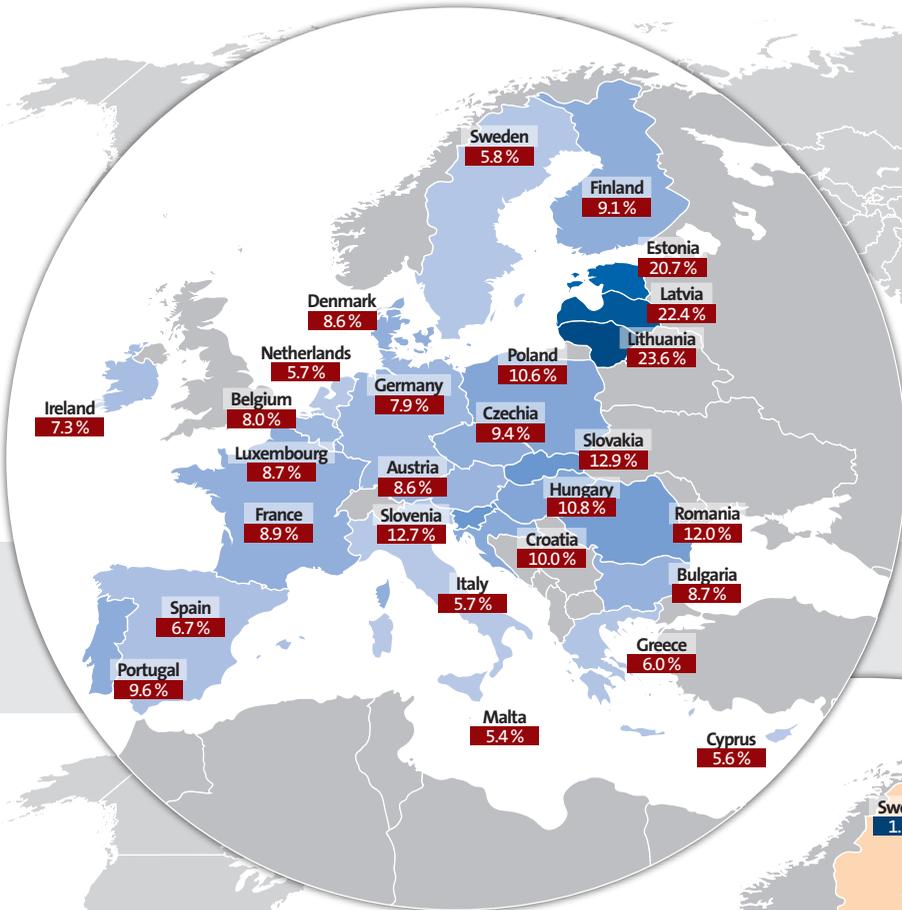
**In the European Union (EU), around seven percent of deaths were attributed to alcohol consumption in 2016** | With only five percent of alcohol attributable deaths, Germany is below the European average. The proportion of alcohol-related deaths is particularly high in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, where over 20 percent of deaths are attributable to alcohol consumption. The proportion of alcohol-related deaths is lowest in Malta, Cyprus, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands, at less than four percent each.

**In all EU countries – except for the Baltic states – the proportion of alcohol-related deaths among men is significantly higher than among women** | There is a particularly marked difference in this respect in Slovenia and Slovakia, where over 12 percent of deaths

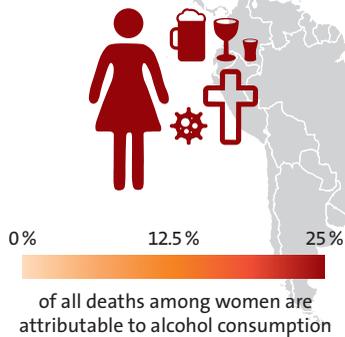
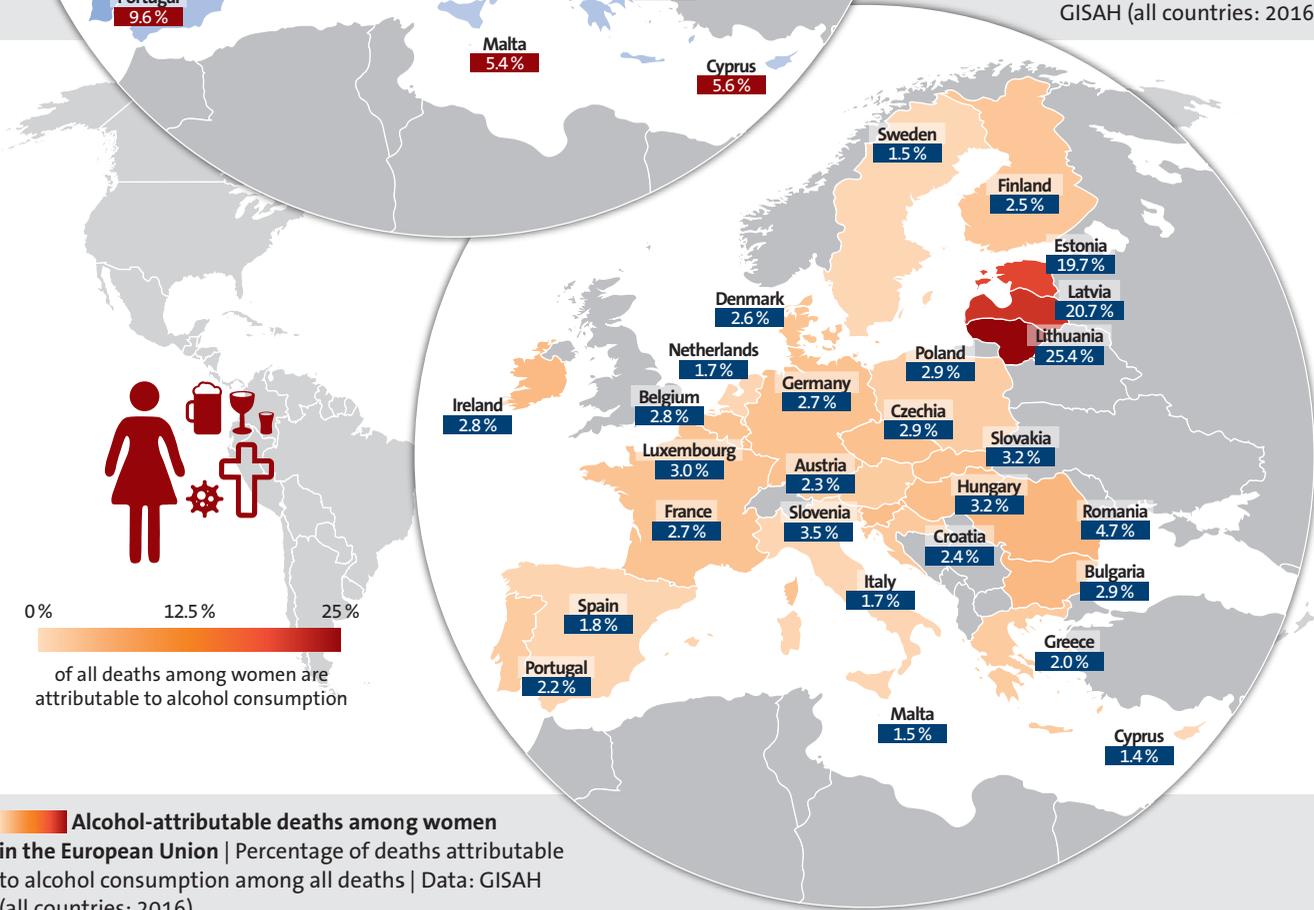
among men but only around three percent of deaths among women are caused by alcohol consumption. In Estonia and Latvia, the proportion of alcohol-related deaths among women is only slightly lower than among men, and in Lithuania, it is actually higher.

**In 2018, an average of 14.3 percent of all deaths in road accidents in the EU were alcohol-related, with very large differences between countries** | For example, in Cyprus, France, Portugal, Slovenia, and Croatia, over 20 percent of deaths in road accidents were alcohol-related, while in the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and Bulgaria, the proportion was five percent or less.





**Alcohol-attributable deaths among men in the European Union** | Percentage of deaths attributable to alcohol consumption among all deaths | Data: GISAH (all countries: 2016)



**Alcohol-attributable deaths among women in the European Union** | Percentage of deaths attributable to alcohol consumption among all deaths | Data: GISAH (all countries: 2016)



# Prevention of Alcohol Consumption in the European Union

2



# 2.1

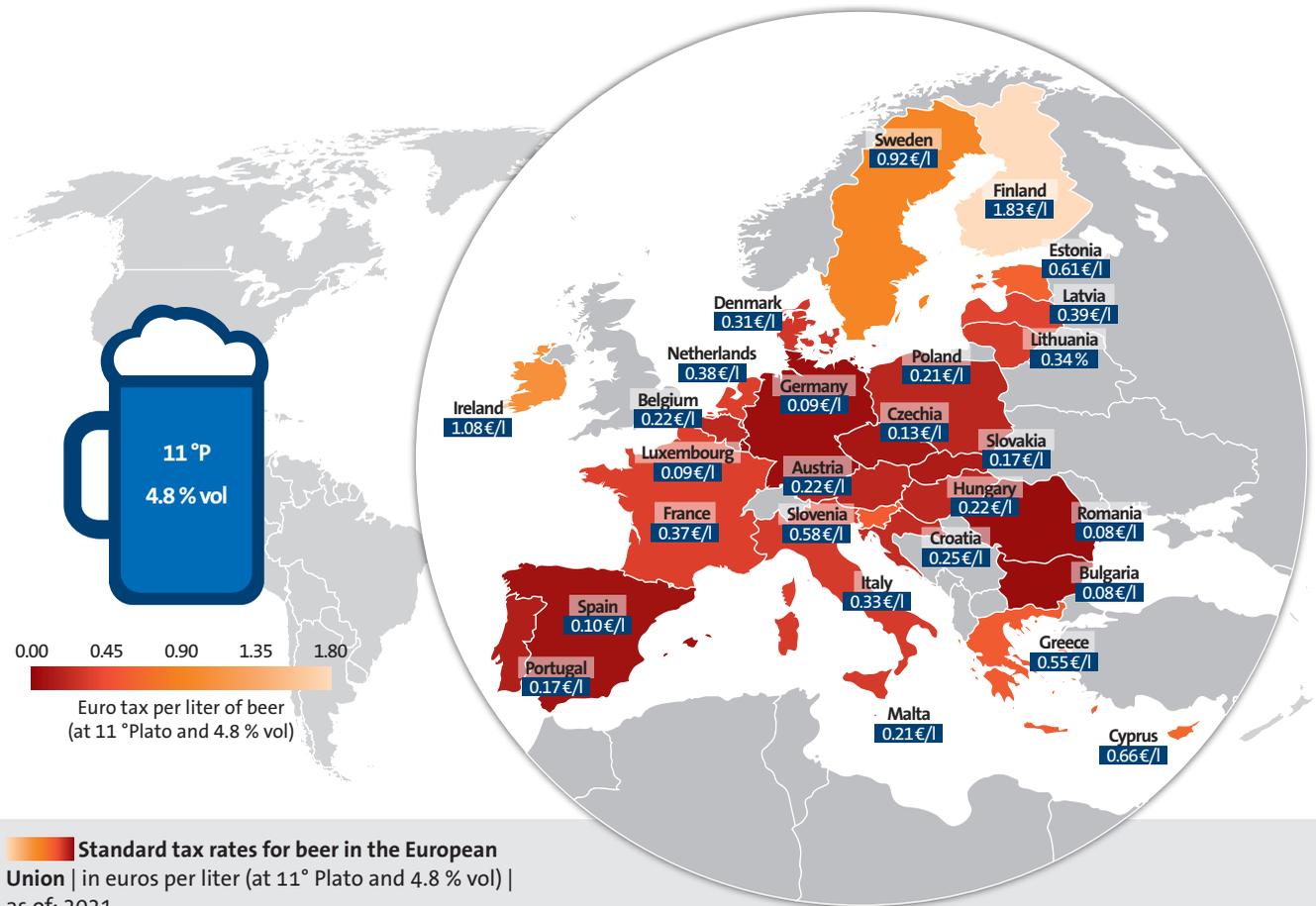
## Pricing Policies in the EU

The European Commission sets minimum tax rates for alcohol (Directives 92/83/EEC and (EU) 2020/1151) and maximum quantities for the cross-border sale of alcoholic beverages (Directive 2008/118/EC, from 2023: Directive (EU) 2020/262, and Directive 2007/74/EC) | Member states may set excise duty rates above these minimum rates. The taxes on alcoholic beverages differ greatly among EU countries, which affects cross-border sales of alcohol. Private individuals may purchase alcohol for personal use within the EU, paying excise taxes only in the country where they purchased it.

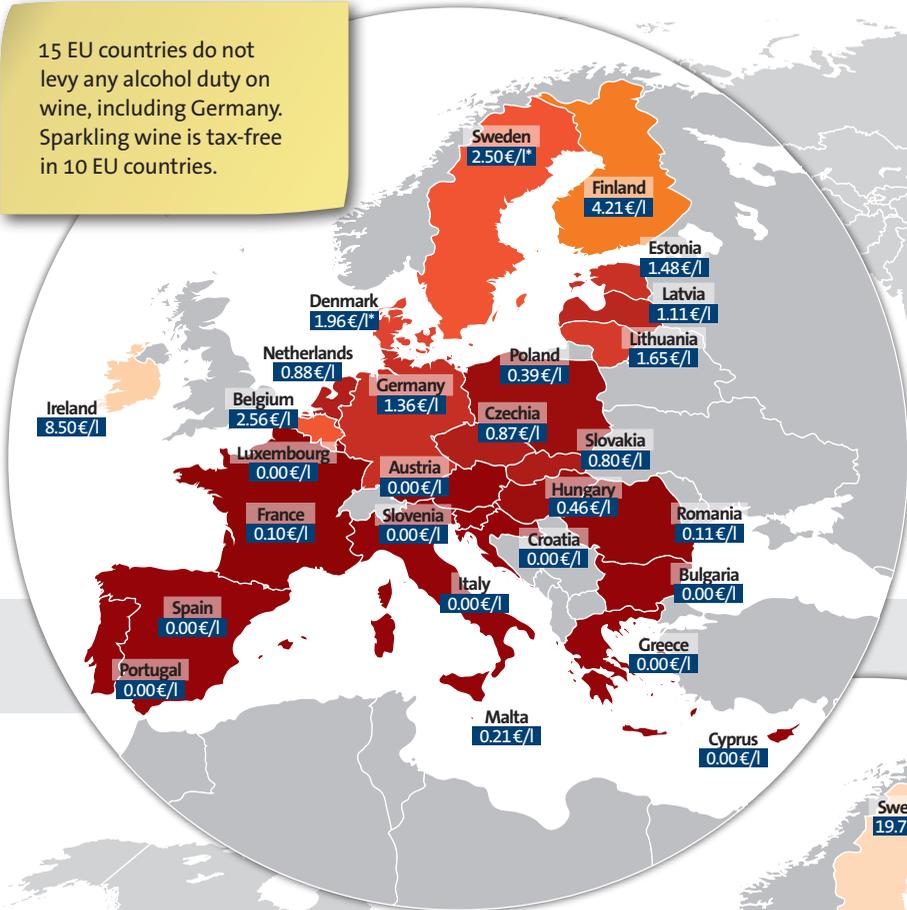
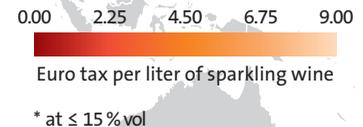
**Among European countries, Germany has rather low alcohol taxes** | In Germany, the current tax rate for beer (0.09 euros per liter) is among the lowest tax rates among EU countries. In

contrast, Finland has the highest tax rate for beer (1.83 euros per liter). Germany and some other EU countries do not levy excise duty on wine, and EU member states differently tax sparkling wine and spirits. For instance, Ireland levies by far the highest tax rate for wine and sparkling wine at 8.50 euros per liter and Finland has the highest tax for spirits (over 20 euros per liter).

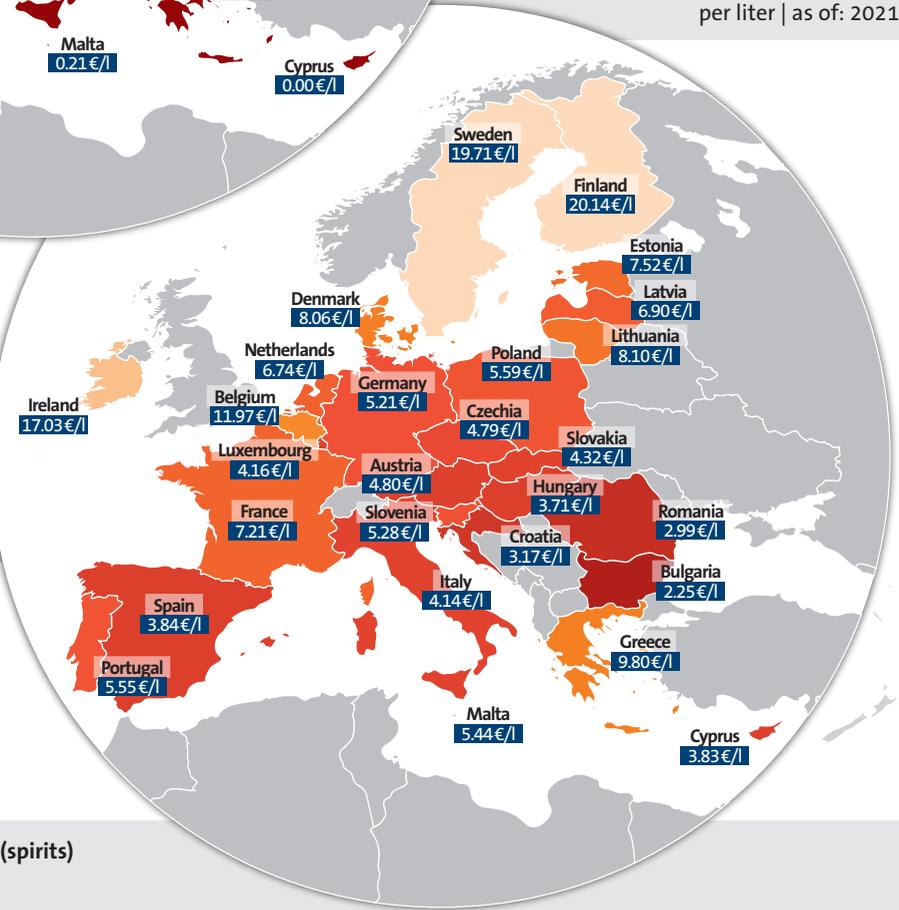
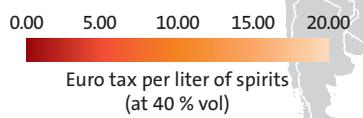
**Europe's Beating Cancer Plan recommends a review of EU legislation relating to the taxation of alcohol and cross-border purchase of alcohol products** | The European Commission will have to adopt proposals for this revision in 2022. The revision has the aim to contribute to reducing harmful alcohol consumption by 10 percent by 2025.



15 EU countries do not levy any alcohol duty on wine, including Germany. Sparkling wine is tax-free in 10 EU countries.



Standard tax rates for sparkling wine in the European Union | in euros per liter | as of: 2021



Standard tax rates for ethyl alcohol (spirits) in the European Union | in euros per liter (at 40% vol) | as of: 2021

# 2.2

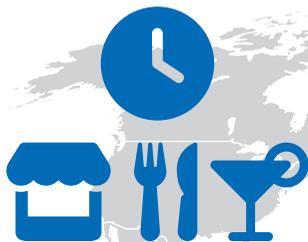
## Restrictions on Supply and Availability in the EU

**In the European Union (EU), there is no common regulation on age limits or alcohol sales** | However, the 2007 European Parliament resolution 2007/2005(INI) recommends that member states restrict access to and availability of alcohol to young people. Potential measures include a strict implementation of existing bans on sales to young people, strong controls at points of sale such as stores and restaurants, and developing guidelines on age limits for the purchase, sale, and distribution of alcoholic beverages.

**In most EU countries, the minimum age for alcohol purchase is 18 years** | In Luxembourg, young people can buy alcohol from the age of 16 years, and in Cyprus and Malta from the age of 17 years. In Germany, Belgium, Denmark, and Austria, 16-year-olds can buy alcoholic beverages with a low alcohol content, but spirits not before the age of 18 years. In Sweden, 18-year-old people can buy alcoholic beverages with up to 3.5% vol; however, beverages

with higher alcohol content can only be purchased from the age of 20 years. Thirteen EU member states set the same age limits for alcohol consumption as for purchase, 11 countries have no age limit for alcohol consumption, 14 countries restrict the hours for alcohol sale in stores, and 12 countries restrict the hours for alcohol sale in restaurants.

**The resolution of the European Parliament on “Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer” of February 2022 recommends, as part of a revised EU alcohol strategy, zero alcohol consumption for minors** | In this context, the principle of subsidiarity and current national legislation on age limits on alcohol consumption must be respected.

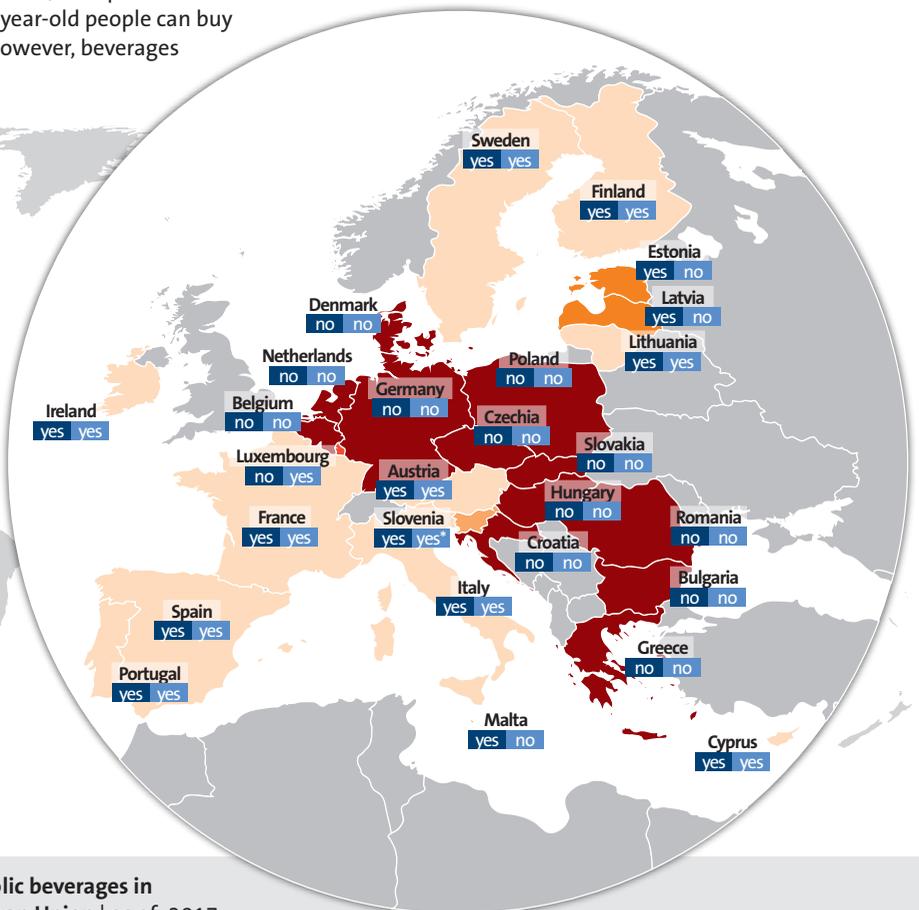


Restrictions on the hours of sale of alcoholic beverages

■ in stores ■ in pubs/restaurants

no	no
no	yes
yes	no
yes	yes*
yes	yes

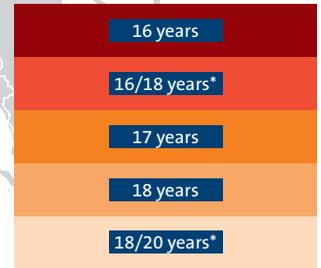
\*only for spirits



Restrictions on the hours of sale of alcoholic beverages in stores and pubs/restaurants in the European Union | as of: 2017

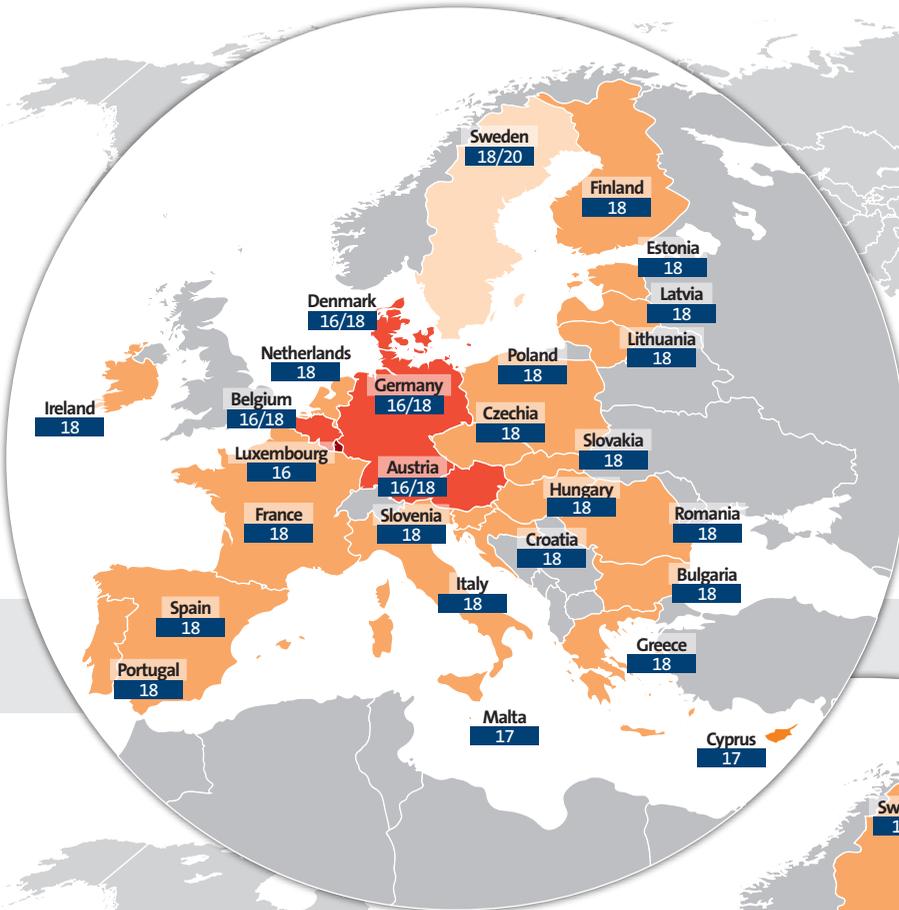


Minimum age for the purchase of alcoholic beverages

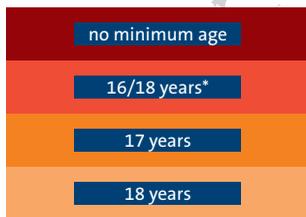


\*depending on the type of alcoholic beverage/ the alcohol content

Minimum age for the purchase of alcoholic beverages in the European Union | as of: 2017

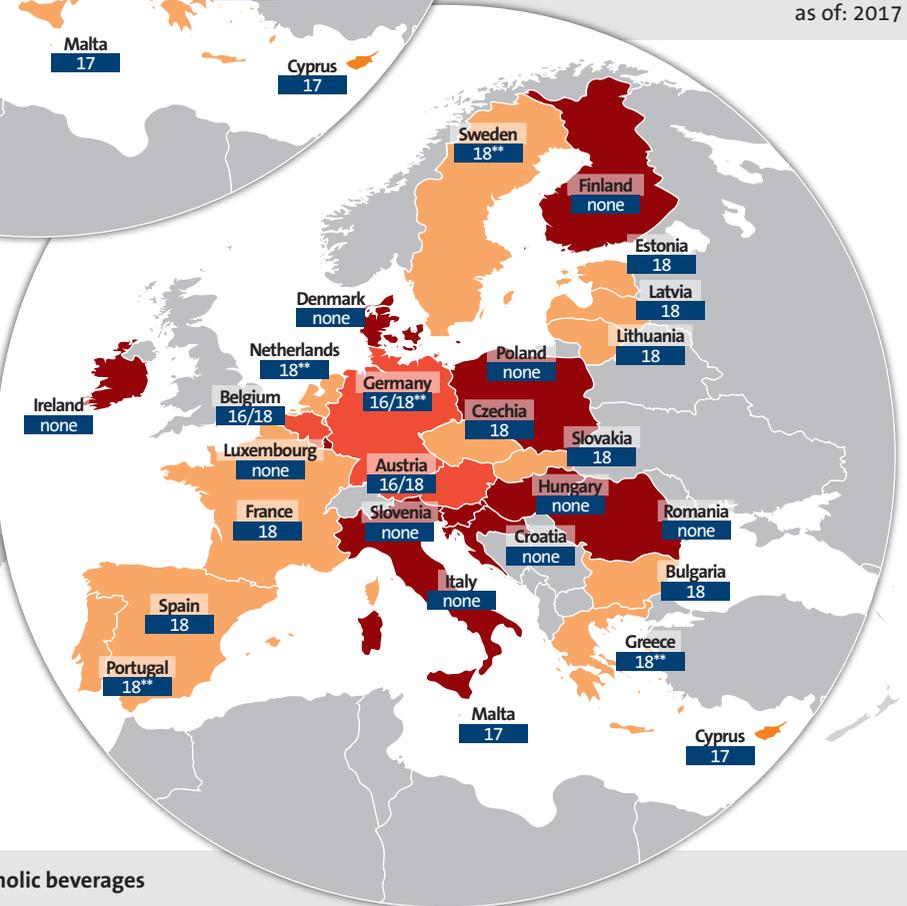


Minimum age for the consumption of alcoholic beverages



\*depending on the type of alcoholic beverage/ the alcohol content

\*\*only in public places or in pubs/restaurants



Minimum age for the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the European Union | as of: 2017

# 2.3

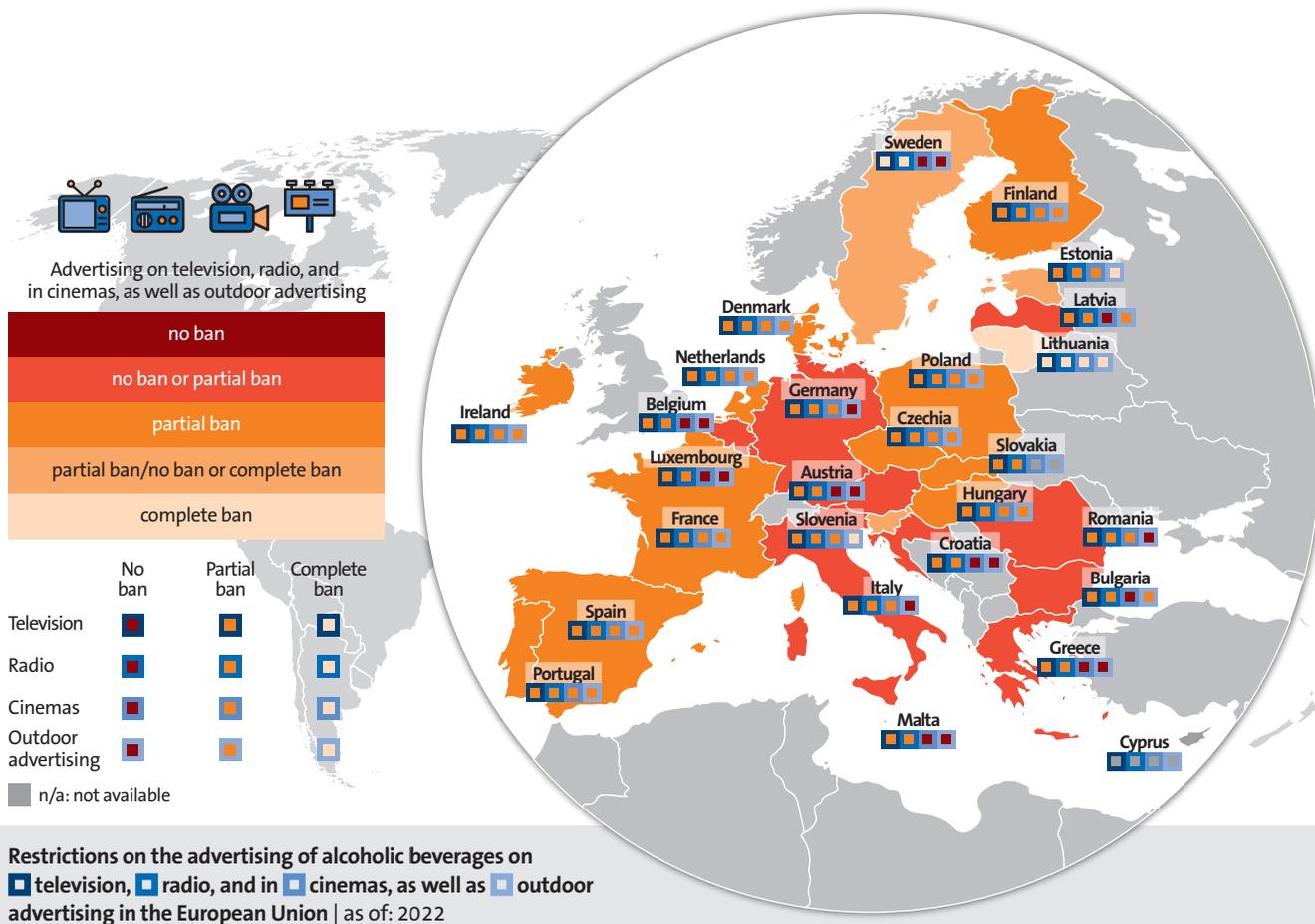
## Advertising Restrictions in the EU

The **European Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)** sets **restrictions on the content of alcohol advertising on TV, radio, and video-sharing platforms** | Directive 2010/13/EU sets content restrictions on alcohol advertising on television. Directive (EU) 2018/1808 extends this regulation to video-sharing platforms and requires member states to promote self- and co-regulation to protect minors from alcohol advertising. The Directive on electronic commerce (2000/31/EC) requires advertising on the Internet to be recognizable as such and the advertiser to be identifiable.

**EU countries restrict alcohol advertising to varying degrees** | Lithuania bans alcohol advertising on TV, radio, print, cinema,

billboards, and sponsorship, and Sweden only in TV, radio, and print. Estonia and Slovenia ban outdoor advertising for alcoholic beverages, while France prohibits sponsorship. Eight countries ban advertising for spirits in different media, with Finland prohibiting advertising for spirits in all media except the Internet. Twenty-one countries have self-regulatory codices from industry.

**Europe's Beating Cancer Plan includes a review on the implementation of the AVMSD** | In a 2022 decision, the EU Parliament recommends a ban on alcohol advertising and sponsorship at sport events attended mainly by children, as well as close monitoring of the implementation of the revised AVMSD.



**Restrictions on the advertising of alcoholic beverages on television, radio, and in cinemas, as well as outdoor advertising in the European Union | as of: 2022**

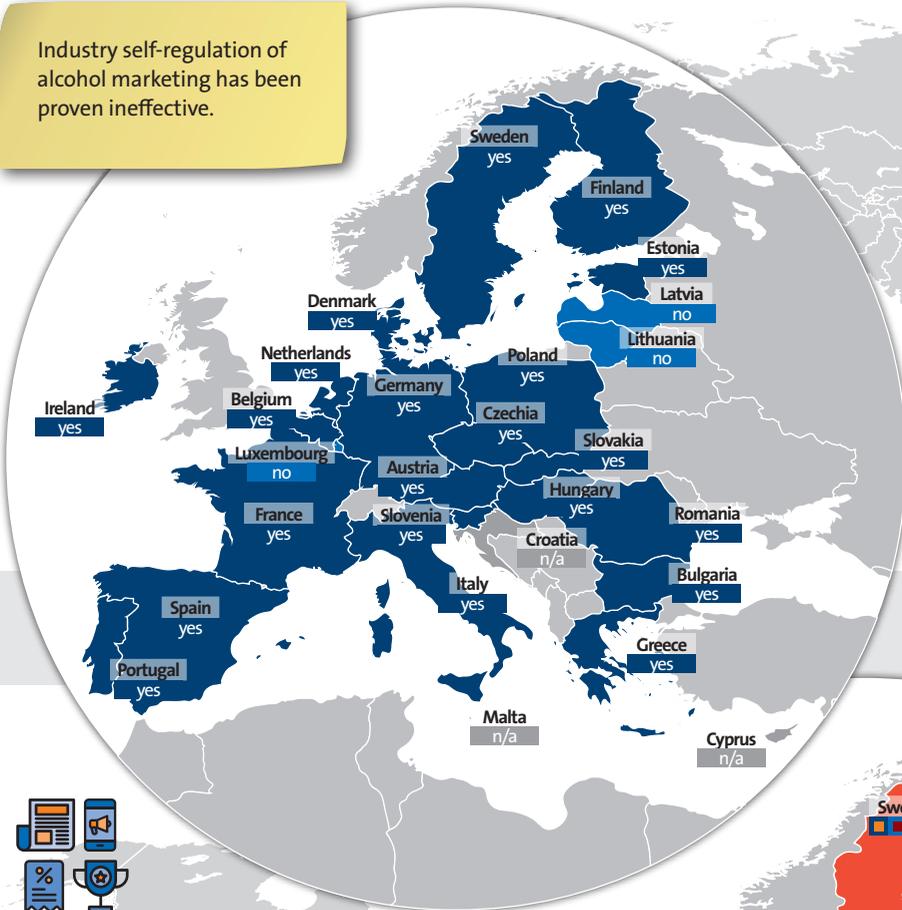
Industry self-regulation of alcohol marketing has been proven ineffective.



Industry self-regulation in alcohol marketing



■ n/a: not available



Industry self-regulation in alcohol marketing in the European Union | as of: 2022

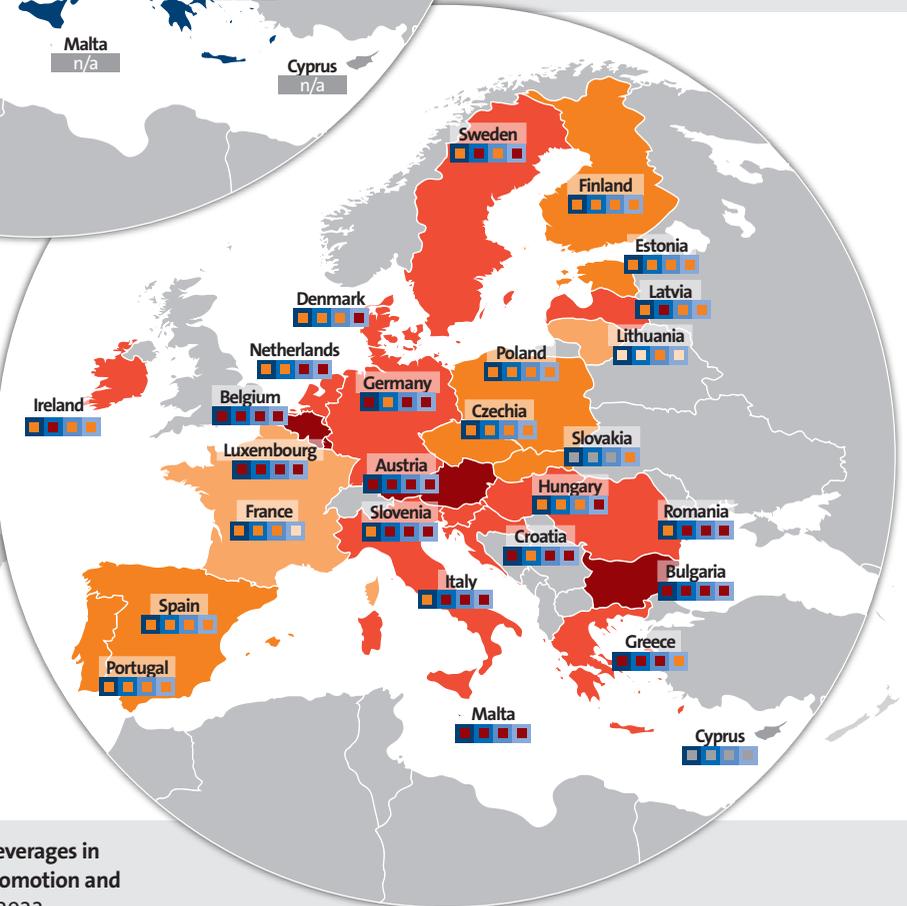


Advertising in print and digital media, as well as promotion and sponsoring



	No ban	Partial ban	Complete ban
Print media	■	■	■
Digital media	■	■	■
Promotion	■	■	■
Sponsoring	■	■	■

■ n/a: not available



Restrictions on the advertising of alcoholic beverages in print and digital media, as well as promotion and sponsoring in the European Union | as of: 2022

# 2.4

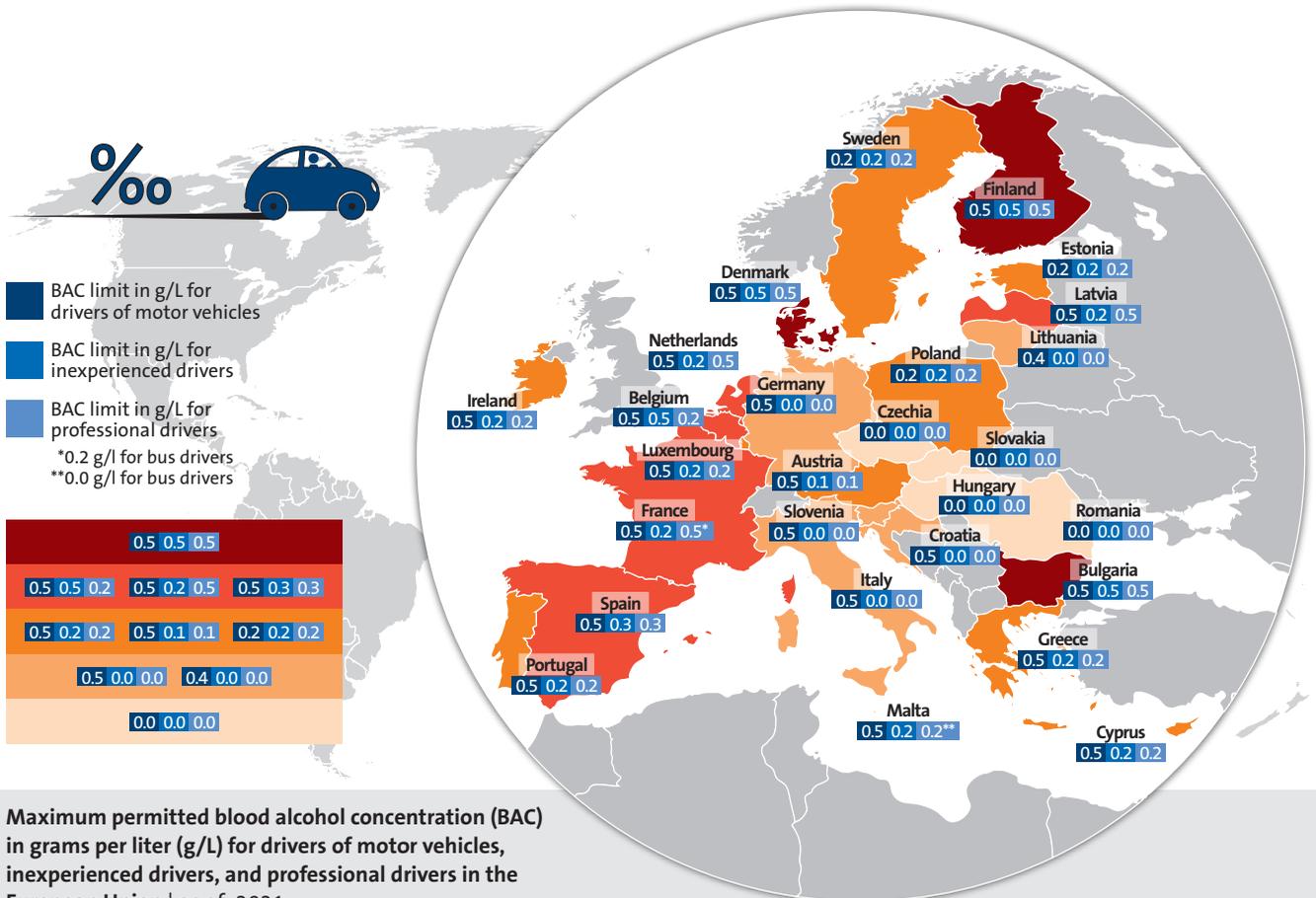
## Legal Framework for Alcohol in Traffic in the EU

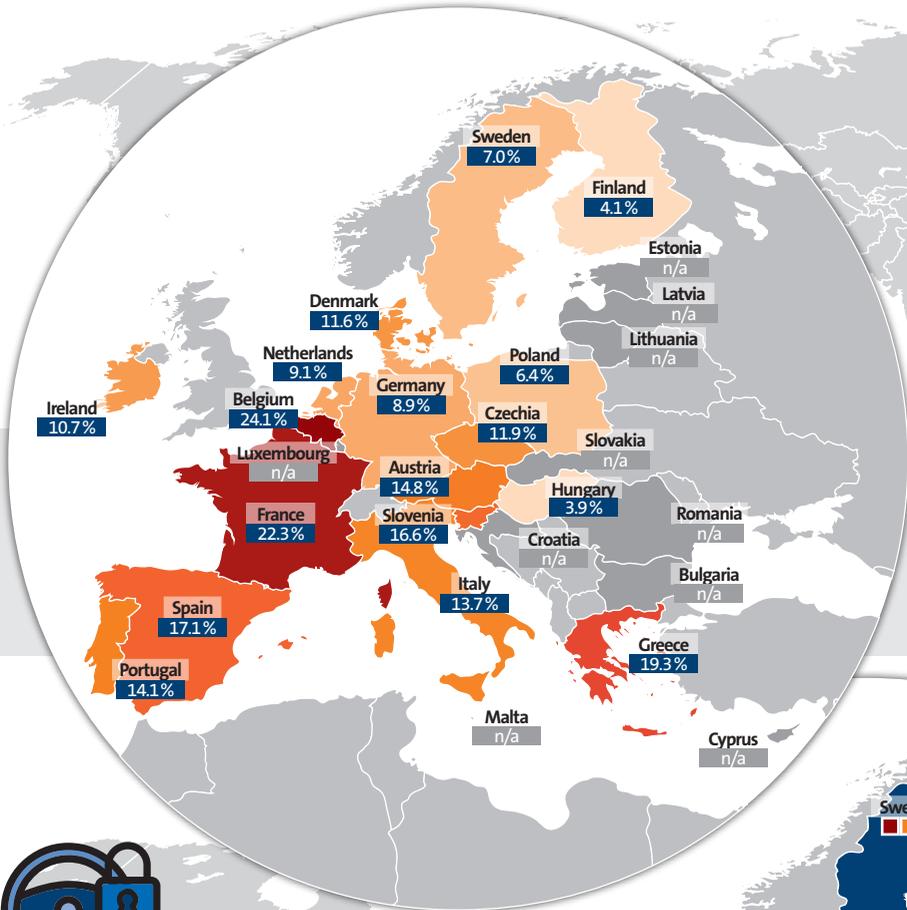
At the European Union (EU) level, there is no common regulation, only a recommendation (2001/115/EC) to reduce drink driving | It recommends a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.5 grams per liter for drivers and riders of motor vehicles and an upper limit of 0.2 grams per liter for inexperienced drivers and drivers of motorcycles, trucks, and transport vehicles. In addition, it recommends random alcohol testing and sobriety checkpoints. In addition, regulation 2019/2144 requires preparing motor vehicles for installing alcohol ignition interlocks.

In most EU countries, the general BAC limit is 0.5 grams per liter or lower | Nineteen EU countries have set a BAC limit of 0.5 grams per liter for drivers of motor vehicles. Lithuania has a BAC limit

of 0.4 grams per liter, three countries have 0.2 grams per liter, and four have an absolute alcohol ban. For inexperienced drivers, there is a BAC limit between 0.0 and 0.3 grams per liter in 24 EU countries. Most EU countries have also introduced a BAC limit of 0.3 grams per liter or lower for professional drivers. Moreover, all EU countries perform random breath tests and 19 countries have sobriety checkpoints as well.

A total of nine EU countries have alcohol interlock programs | Eight countries have an alcohol interlock program for offenders driving under the influence of alcohol, four have preventive alcohol interlock programs for bus drivers, and nine have voluntary alcohol interlock programs.





n/a: not available

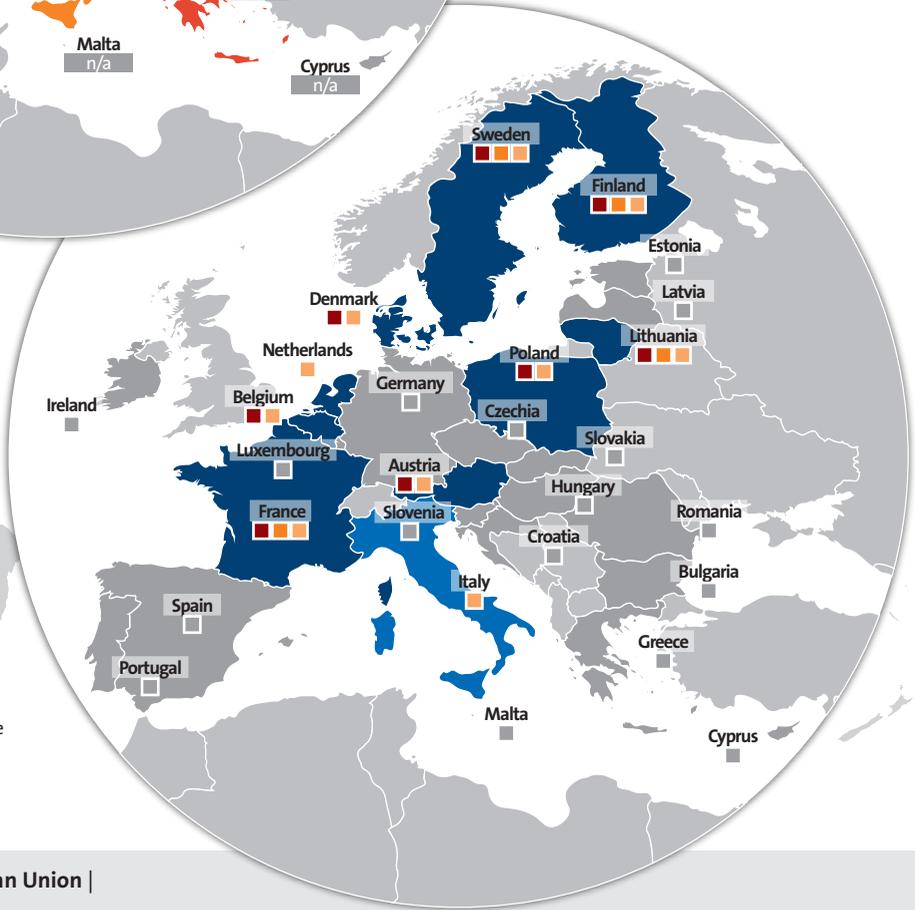
Percentage of people who reported having driven a car after drinking alcohol at least once in the last 30 days, despite they may have been over the legal alcohol limit for driving, by EU country | n/a: not available | Data: ESRA2 2018



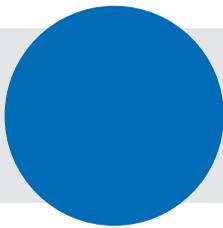
Existing alcohol interlock program/law implemented

Amendments to the law in order to make an alcohol interlock program feasible in preparation

- Rehabilitation programs for drink-driving offenders following by court or administrative rulings
- Mandatory preventive programs (e.g. for bus drivers) following by regulation or other agreements
- Voluntary programs in order to assure the quality of transport services or for private use
- No alcohol interlock program



Alcohol interlock programs in the European Union | as of: 2020



# References and List of Figures

## 1 Alcohol Consumption in the European Union and its Consequences

Photo: © Кирилл Рыжов/Fotolia (bearbeitet)

### 1.1 Alcohol Consumption by Adults in the EU

#### Text

Eurostat (2022) Health determinants. Alcohol consumption. Frequency of alcohol consumption by sex, age and educational attainment level. Last update: April 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Eurostat (2022) Health determinants. Alcohol consumption. Frequency of heavy episodic drinking by sex, age and educational attainment level. Last update: April 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & European Commission (2020) Health at a glance: Europe 2020: State of health in the EU cycle. OECD Publishing, Paris, France

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*Figure: Consumption per capita of pure alcohol (beer, wine/sparkling wine, spirits; total, including other alcoholic beverages) among EU citizens aged 15 years and older in liters per year by country*

World Health Organization (2021) Global Information System on Alcohol and Health (GISAH). Levels of Consumption. Alcohol, recorded per capita (15+) consumption (in litres of pure alcohol). Last update: April 2021, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/global-information-system-on-alcohol-and-health> (accessed 18 June 2022)

*Figures: Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among men in the European Union | Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among women in the European Union*

Eurostat (2022) Health determinants. Alcohol consumption. Frequency of heavy episodic drinking by sex, age and educational attainment level. Last update: April 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database> (accessed 18 June 2022)

### 1.2 Alcohol Consumption by Adolescents in the EU

#### Text

Eurostat (2022) Health determinants. Alcohol consumption. Frequency of alcohol consumption by sex, age and educational attainment level. Last update: April 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database> (accessed 18 June 2022)

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Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & European Commission (2020) Health at a glance: Europe 2020: State of health in the EU cycle. OECD Publishing, Paris

World Health Organization (2019) Status report on alcohol consumption, harm and policy responses in 30 European countries.

*Figure: Frequency of alcohol consumption among boys and girls in the European Union*

Eurostat (2022) Health determinants. Alcohol consumption. Frequency of alcohol consumption by sex, age and educational attainment level. Last update: April 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database> (accessed 18 June 2022)

*Figures: Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among boys in the European Union | Frequency of heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking) among girls in the European Union*

Eurostat (2022) Health determinants. Alcohol consumption. Frequency of heavy episodic drinking by sex, age and educational attainment level. Last update: April 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database> (accessed 18 June 2022)

### 1.3 Consequences of Alcohol Consumption in the EU

#### Text

Modijefsky M, Janse R, Spit W (Ecorys), et al. (2021) Prevention of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Final Report. April 2021, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, Directorate C – Land, Unit C2 – Road Safety, European Commission, Brussels

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*Figure: Percentage of alcohol-related deaths among all traffic-related deaths in EU countries*

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## 2 Prevention of Alcohol Consumption in the European Union

Photo: © ssoil322/Fotolia (bearbeitet)

### 2.1 Pricing Policies in the EU

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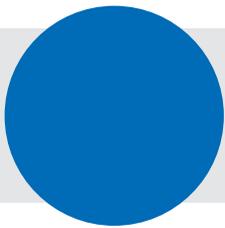
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*Figures: Maximum permitted blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in grams per liter (g/L) for drivers of motor vehicles, inexperienced drivers, and professional drivers in the European Union | Alcohol interlock programs in the European Union*

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*Figure: Percentage of people who reported having driven a car after drinking alcohol at least once in the last 30 days, despite they may have been over the legal alcohol limit for driving, by EU country*

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