

Health

ALCOHOL AND ROAD SAFETY

Commission Recommendation of 17 January 2001 on the maximum permitted blood alcohol content (BAC) for drivers of motorised vehicles ([C\(2000\) 4397](#))

Objective

To increase road safety and fight drink driving by setting a uniform maximum level of alcohol in the blood for drivers and encouraging cooperation among Member States within the EU.

Relevance for the hospitality industry

The text is of interest for the sector because it deals with drink driving, an issue of concern for all the economic operators involved in the selling of alcohol as well as for the general public.

State of progress

Adopted on 17 January 2001.

Content

The Commission Recommendation (a non-binding instrument) proposes to limit at 0.5 mg/ml the permitted blood alcohol concentration level (BAC). The main elements of the measure are:

- All Member States should adopt a general legal maximum blood alcohol concentration limit of no higher than 0.5 mg/ml. Only three Member States (Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom) still retain a maximum legal blood alcohol concentration limit higher than 0,5 mg/ml;
- A lower legal maximum limit of no higher than 0.2 mg/ml should be adopted for inexperienced drivers (those who are learning to drive or have only been in possession of a full driving licence for less than two years), drivers of large goods vehicles and buses, and riders of two-wheel motor vehicles;
- All Member States should adopt random breath testing to deter drivers from drinking. They should also seek to ensure that every driver has a good chance of being tested at least once every three years, in accordance with the current best practice standard.

As the measure is in the form of a Recommendation, the decision on whether or not to reduce the level of permitted blood alcohol concentration to 0.5 mg/ml, in Member States where this is not already the case, is left to the governments concerned.

For a detailed summary of the Recommendation (and related texts) you can visit the [SCADPlus](#) website (European Commission).

HOTREC position

HOTREC shares the concerns of public authorities at all levels in relation to road safety and drink driving. HOTREC is pleased with the Commission's Recommendation on road safety leaving it to Member States to set their own national blood-alcohol levels. HOTREC members are proactively involved in many countries in awareness-raising campaigns against drink driving. HOTREC encourages all measures aimed at better education of the public at large and other positive ways of tackling the issue of drinking and driving. Education and proper enforcement of existing regulations (rather than new laws) are crucial to sensitise drivers and to achieve a higher level of road safety across the EU.

Official references

Commission Recommendation of 17 January 2001 on the maximum permitted blood alcohol content (BAC) for drivers of motorised vehicles, O.J. L 43 of 14.02.2001 ([C\(2000\) 4397](#))

See also:

European Parliament resolution of 5 September 2007 on an European Union strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm ([P6_TA\(2007\)0377](#))

Communication from the Commission of 24 October 2006, "An EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm" ([COM\(2006\) 625 final](#))

Council Resolution of 26 June 2000 on the improvement of road safety ([2000/C 218/01](#)), O.J. C 218 of 31.07.2000

Council Conclusions of 5 June 2001 on a Community strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm ([2001/C 175/01](#)), O.J. C 175 of 20.06.2001

Commission Communication of 17 March 2000 "Priorities in EU road safety: progress report and ranking of actions"

European Alcohol and Health Forum [website](#)

DG SANCO [website](#) on alcohol policy

Fact [sheets](#) on drink driving of the European Transport Safety Council