

WFA commitment to the EU Code of Conduct for responsible business and marketing practices

Responsible Marketing Pact against minors' exposure to alcohol marketing

The [Responsible Marketing Pact](#) (RMP) against minors' exposure to alcohol marketing is a 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.

The nine members of the RMP have been brought together under the auspices of the World Federation of Advertisers, which acts as the secretariat for the program, co-ordinating meetings and commissioning regular compliance audits from independent third parties.

To date, the RMP is **the most advanced responsible alcohol marketing standard globally**. It establishes clear guidelines on where alcohol ads should be placed, the content of ads (i.e. creative execution) and sets new standards and controls for digital media.

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 new standards for responsible alcohol marketing communications that provide minors with an additional layer of protection.

Advertising standards have the significant benefit that they can be updated rapidly to stay on top of a constantly evolving landscape (e.g. new media and marketing techniques). Stakeholder-driven initiatives, such as the RMP, raise the bar for the whole industry and have an impact beyond the companies that have signed up to the commitment. Non-member companies have begun to take on certain elements of the RMP and industry best practice is spreading via sectoral and national codes.

The RMP member companies welcome and 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.

In line with the Code's indicative action to *"apply responsible food marketing and advertising practices, e.g. by adhering to self- and co-regulatory initiatives and standards"* **RMP member companies submit their commitment against minors' exposure to alcohol marketing.**

RMP membership requires companies to:

- **Placement of ads: Only place ads in media where a minimum of 70% of the audience are adults.** Today, ad spend is increasingly shifting to digital media and RMP advertisers must also use all available technology and user data to ensure ads are targeted only to those users over the LPA.
- **Content of ads: Abide by a comprehensive exclusion list of over 40 practices and techniques that are likely to be disproportionately appealing to minors.** This exclusion list is regularly updated as we continue to monitor and fine-tune best practices in order to avoid appealing to minors.
- **Digital media: Integrate safeguards to reduce minors' interaction on social media.** A checklist of five key elements to help ensure minors' online experience is free from alcohol ads.

- **Age-gating:** stopping those under the legal drinking age from accessing alcohol-related sites or profiles;
- **Forwarding advice notice:** reminding users not to share alcohol ads with anyone under the legal drinking age;
- **User generated content policy:** reminding users not to post anything which condones irresponsible or excessive drinking;
- **Transparency:** a requirement for advertisers to have an official badge on alcohol brand social media profiles so users know these are advertiser-owned pages (and therefore commercial) and not user generated content; and
- **Responsible drinking message:** a requirement for advertisers to include a message such as “Don’t drink and drive” in all marketing communications, in line with industry best practice.
- **Influencer Marketing:** Online, influencers must age-gate all brand related posts to prevent minors from seeing them. On platforms where it is not possible to age-gate posts effectively, influencers must be over 25 and appeal primarily to adult audiences. Influencers will be made aware of the RMP exclusion list and will agree not to feature these elements in their brand communications.

Compliance with the RMP commitment is audited on an annual basis by independent third parties, and progress reports will be submitted to the European Commission on an annual basis. You can find more information on the commitment and monitoring reports on our dedicated website: <https://the-rmp.eu/>

RMP members:



Rationale: 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.

Fulfilling an EU mandate: An effective EU-wide approach to the exposure of children to alcohol marketing has already been agreed and is enshrined in recent EU legislation: the EU [Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#) (AVMSD) encourages self- and co-regulation to reduce children’s exposure to alcohol marketing. In line with this, the RMP establishes clear guidelines on where alcohol ads should be placed, the content of ads (i.e. creative execution) and sets new standards and controls for digital media in order to reduce minors’ exposure to alcohol marketing, limit the appeal of alcohol marketing to minors, and ensure minors’ digital media experience is free from alcohol ads.

Indicators: Compliance with the RMP commitment is audited on an annual basis by independent third parties. Monitoring reports are available on our dedicated website: <https://the-rmp.eu/>

ANNEX: RMP Exclusion list

Category	Sub-Cat	RMP EXCLUSION LIST
CHARACTER¹		
Real	<i>Actors</i>	Alcohol Commercial communications must not feature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any actor/model who is under 25 years old in real life. • School teachers/personnel; • Child/teenage-related leaders; • Child-related performers & child-related entertainers • Child-related fairy tale characters.
Real	<i>Celebrities</i>	Alcohol commercial communications must not feature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any celebrity whose audience is primarily composed of minors; • Any celebrity below 25 years old, whenever this celebrity actively and explicitly endorses the brand and is core to the commercial communication in his/her individual capacity.
Fictional	<i>Human fictional characters</i>	Alcohol commercial communications must not feature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any fictional character (or any associated elements) whose audience is primarily composed of minors; • Any fictional character below 25 years old, whenever this character actively and explicitly endorses the brand and is core to the commercial communication in its individual capacity.
Fictional	<i>Animated / Cartoon characters</i>	Alcohol commercial communications must not feature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any animated cartoon character extracted from a piece of work primarily viewed and/or read by minors; • Any animated cartoon character whose style and design are evidently childish.
CHARACTER'S STYLE		
	Dress sense	Alcohol commercial communications must not feature any dress style and apparel evidently extracted from childish/teenage style, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any child/teenage-related uniforms; • Outfits directly inspired by such uniforms.
	Behaviour	Alcohol commercial communications must not feature any evident children/teenagers behaviour, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying; • Teenage peer pressure; • Teenage rebellion.

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Gestures	<p>Alcohol commercial communications must not feature any evident childish/teenage gestures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any gestures extracted from childish/teenage body language.
ENVIRONMENT	
Action (storyline)	<p>Alcohol commercial communications must not feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any visual flashbacks to childhood and/or to adolescence; • Childish pranks; • Rites of passage from adolescence to adulthood; • Teenage/childish challenges; • Teenage romances/infatuations and 'first times'.
Setting (place/time)	<p>Alcohol commercial communications must not feature any childish/teenage-related settings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any child-related fairy tales and/or child-related fantasy worlds; • Schools; • Child-related attractions, child-related roller coasters, and merry-go-rounds; • Playgrounds; • Zoos; • Skate parks; • Teen clubs; • Indoor game arcades accessible to minors; • Summer camps for minors.
Music	<p>Alcohol commercial communications must not feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any music of a singer/musician whose audience is composed mainly of minors; • Any music/song which is primarily listened to by minors. • Any singer/musician younger than 25 years old when the song explicitly promotes a brand, the band is promoting the brand and the musician in question is core to the commercial communication in her or his individual capacity

¹ Consumers appearing in brand promotional communications are not remunerated and therefore should not be considered as characters. Consumers have to be and appear to be over the legal purchase age in a given market.

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SPORTS

Alcohol commercial communications must not feature:

- Any athletes whose audience is primarily composed of minors;
- Any sports which are primarily followed by minors.
- Any athlete below 25 years old, whenever he/she actively and explicitly endorses the brand and is core to the commercial communication in its individual capacity.

DRAWINGS

Alcohol commercial communications must not feature:

- Any child-like scribbles or drawings;
- Any drawings which have a style and design which is evidently childish.

OBJECTS

Alcohol commercial communications must not feature objects used primarily by children and teenagers including:

- Child-related toys;
- Objects extracted from child/baby tableware sets;
- Dummies;
- School-related objects.