

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 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 (WFA), which acts as the secretariat for the program, co-ordinating meetings and commissioning regular compliance audits from independent third parties.

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

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 committed to undergoing independent third-party compliance monitoring of the RMP commitments.

In 2023, a **compliance monitoring of the digital controls on social media and logged-in environments** (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X) as well as websites was conducted. The monitoring was carried out by Accenture **found that 92% of the profiles were compliant with the RMP commitments**. The European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA)¹ reviewed the results and found that the rate was almost 90%, well within the margin of error.

The audit was carried between September and October 2023 in fourteen markets across the world, seven in the EU.² and the results for the EU markets are published on the [RMP website](#).

As reported last year, in 2022, **EASA and independent research firm Nielsen monitored compliance of RMP members' alcohol ads against the RMP exclusion list**, in order to ensure ads are not appealing to minors as stipulated in one of the three pillars. In addition to checking whether any element from the exclusion list is present, the auditors were also asked to check against a set of open questions (known as the road test) designed to qualitatively double check that no further potential source of primary appeal was present in the ad. Paid ads on social media (Facebook and Instagram) were monitored for the first time, as well as alcohol ads on TV and YouTube.

¹ The [European Advertising Standards Alliance](#) brings together national advertising self-regulatory organisations in Europe. Based in Brussels, EASA is the European voice for advertising self-regulation.

² Monitored in France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Poland and the Netherlands.

The results showed that:

- 99% of ads were compliant with the creative execution guidelines;
- 4 ads featured elements flagged for the road test as sources of potential underage appeal.

The audit 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 RMP members broadcast between 1 August and 30 November 2022. The ads were provided by Nielsen, a global media and marketing performance management company.

In addition to compliance monitoring, WFA commissioned Nielsen to carry out an analysis on minors' exposure to online alcohol marketing, one of the three pillars of the RMP.³ 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. The CEOs of the biggest alcohol producers have made a global commitment to reach 95% of compliance with digital safeguards such as age affirmation, forward advice notice and responsible drinking messages.

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

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**

³ 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.

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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