[SK] Proposal for Banning the Advertising of Alcohol

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On 14 January 2009 a proposal for amendments to the Act No. 147/2001 Coll. on Advertisements and on the Amendments to Certain Acts (which entered into force on 1 May 2001) concerning the ban of alcohol advertising was made by members of the Slovakian Parliament. The amendment which is at the moment in the second reading is expected to come into effect on 1 June 2009.

The reason for this proposal is the fact that alcoholism is becoming a serious and acute problem in society nowadays, particularly in the case of children and minors. Its explanatory report refers to the fact that the age of people who consume alcohol is becoming increasingly lower. According to various researches children and minors are those who are most influenced by advertising. Consequently, schoolchildren who are exposed to alcohol advertising drink about 50 % more than those who are not.

The aim of the proposal is to forbid the advertising of all alcoholic beverages in places children and youths most often frequent, that is, in particular on the streets and in cinemas. Therefore a ban on advertising all alcoholic beverages, except beer, on billboards, posters, in public transport vehicles, on all types of information carriers located in public, excluding the points of sale for alcohol (hereinafter referred to as “products sale”), in cinemas before eight p.m., the distribution of samples of alcoholic beverages to the public (excluding those samples of alcoholic beverages that are distributed at the place of products sale), on advertising articles that are not related to drinking alcoholic beverages and that are distributed to the public, the sponsorship of alcoholic beverages, as well as the introduction of a trade mark, emblem or other specific name for alcoholic drinks is proposed.

According to the proposal, identifying operating areas and means of transportation, that are directly related to the production and sale of alcoholic beverages, information and advertising materials designed exclusively for producers and sellers of alcoholic beverages, distribution of samples of alcoholic beverages at meetings related to the production and sale of alcoholic beverages, as well as information regarding their sale on concrete products placed in a store, are not considered to be advertising of alcoholic drinks.

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None of the bans mentioned applies to advertising of beer. This exception stems from the fact that beer is produced with various levels of alcohol content, including even alcohol-free brews and moreover it is considered to be “a national drink“.

However, the proposal has met with much criticism up to now, inter alia the argument that the proposal would not help to lower alcohol consumption among underage drinkers. Furthermore, the fact that the proposal forbids advertising of alcohol with the exception of beer has been criticised, as some kinds of beer have a higher content of alcohol than some light wines. In addition, it has been pointed out that the culture of alcohol consumption, for instance wine, exists in many countries and has nothing to do with excessive drinking.

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