Regulation of alcohol marketing varies between countries. For example, Lithuania has recently implemented a close to total marketing ban, whereas other countries have voluntary industry self-regulation. A major challenge is the rapid evolution of digital communication, particularly the difficulty to discern commercial interests behind social media content. Finland is the only country that has implemented legislation that specifically targets social media and online marketing. Regulation of fast changing online landscapes is challenging and national legislations often lag behind. Many aspects of digital commercial communications are still unknown to policy-makers and researchers in public health.

Implementation of the best buys pricing policies are still low across Europe. Simple approaches, such as linking tax rates to inflation, have only been implemented by a few countries. Although there is huge variation in alcohol tax rates and systems across the continent, no country taxes all alcoholic products on the basis of their alcohol content; an approach that is likely to be more effective for both improving health and reducing health inequalities. Fortunately, the picture is not universally bleak. Russia and Scotland, for example, have taken strong action on prices in recent years through the introduction of innovative policies (eg, minimum unit pricing).

The report on the European region consultation on the implementation and achievements of the EAPA 2012–2020 highlights the need for a new roadmap that will, first, aim to strengthen the implementation of the EAPA at the country level and, second, to support member states to achieve targets set in important public health commitments, such as those related to reducing non-communicable diseases and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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