

A COMMENTARY ON THE PROHIBITION OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING IN LITHUANIA IN RELATION TO MINORS¹

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Abstract: The Republic of Lithuania enacted new alcohol legislation, which includes many alcohol beverages control measures. One of the most controversial was the ban of alcohol advertising in mass media, which provoked negative reactions of alcohol market and foreign media. This rule triggered whole-society discussion about the positive impact on society, especially minors. The author analyses the enacted Lithuanian regulation and different opinions, as well as the comparison with the broadcasting regulation of alcohol advertising in the Slovak Republic which has similar world position in international drinking ratings.

Keywords: the ban on alcohol advertising, Lithuania alcohol regulation, minor's protection, broadcasting of advertising, Slovak alcohol regulation

1 INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Lithuania is a Baltic country situated in Eastern Europe. One of the most serious social problems is undue consumption of alcohol beverages. The Lithuanian Government decided to solve the alcohol problem through strict regulations. The aim of the article is an analysis one of the most controversial measure, which is the general ban on any alcohol advertising. The special restrictions are targeted on minors. I would like to introduce Lithuanian Law, problems connected with new regulation and offer my subjective view based on results of scientific researches and my own experience in Lithuania.

2 NEW ANTI-ALCOHOL LAW IN LITHUANIA

As of 1 January 2018, new Lithuanian Law came into effect, with the main intention to reduce drinking of alcohol. The regulation is mainly focused on underaged people and protection of public health.

2.1 Social background of new Law

Eastern Europe was found to be one of the regions with globally the highest burden of alcohol-attributable diseases and mortality and for some indicators, such as alcohol-attributable mortality,

¹ The article was processed within the project: UK/325/2018 „Ochrana maloletých prostriedkami verejnoprávnej regulácie elektronických médií“ funded by Comenius University in Bratislava.

it was the region with the highest burden.² According to the reports of the World Health Organization (WHO)³, Lithuania has in the long term the highest level of alcohol consumption, but also the highest rate of alcohol-related mortality within the European Union.⁴

Lithuania is not the only Eastern-Europe country with alcoholism troubles. The alcohol consumption has rapidly increased in other Eastern European countries, e.g. the Czech Republic, which was in 2017 on second place behind Lithuania in OECD alcohol-drinking ranking,⁵ or Moldova, Belarus, Romania, etc.⁶ In contrast, the alcohol consumption in Slovakia, which is long-term in similar alcohol consumption ranking, is developing a totally opposite trend, and in 2017 reached a minimum since 2003.⁷

In the past decade, Lithuania decided to “declare war” on alcoholism and alcohol-attributable diseases and enacted concept “best buys” and step by step implemented anti-alcohol measures, recommended by WHO.⁸ The Concept of “best buy”, created by WHO, is defined as an intervention for which there is compelling evidence that it is not only highly cost-effective but it is also feasible, low in cost, and appropriate to implement within the constraints of the local health system.⁹

2.2 New anti-alcohol legislation in Lithuania

In 2017, the major changes in alcohol policy were implemented in the Lithuanian legislation, which is in effect since 1 January 2018:¹⁰

- The legal age to purchase or consume alcohol was increased from 18 years to 20 years.

² GBD 2016 Risk Factors Collaborators.

Available at: <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5614451>> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

³ Who global status report on alcohol and health 2017. Available at: <http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/gsr_2018/en> (accessed on 5th November 2018);

Who global status report on alcohol and health 2014. Available at:

<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/112736/9789240692763_eng.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

Who global status report on alcohol and health 2011. Available at: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/alcohol_2011/en (accessed on 5th November 2018).

⁴ GRIGORIEV, P. – JASILIONIS, D. – STUMBRYŠ, D. – STANKŪNIENĖ, V. – SHKOLNIKOV, V. M.: Individual- and area-level characteristics associated with alcohol-related mortality among adult Lithuanian males: A multilevel analysis based on census-linked data. Available at <<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0181622>> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

⁵ OECD Data. KUČEROVÁ, T.: V Česku roste spotřeba alkoholu. Více než Češi pijí jen Litevci. Available at: <https://ekonomika.idnes.cz/alkohol-cesi-piji-alkohol-oecd-dku-/ekonomika.aspx?c=A180720_150136_ekonomika_kuce> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

⁶ Map In What country drinks the most alcohol? Available at: <https://vinepair.com/articles/map-countries-drink-most-alcohol/> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

⁷ Štatistická ročenka Slovenskej republiky 2017. Available at: https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/!ut/p/z1/tVFNB8IwDP01HEPcJm3SYxmolLFpsHXQXKY0TUYG_QA6GP9-7bTDPgTSDvPBsq1n6z0_LPASi1le7LNsbFXXKTdunwn-asZgPBk4IwLwhxJNkOIvuAwco4MV3AL-djyB-CO-i-YS2AA-Ly_uPWGChyqZuVjitsr1cof0a1a9ZD9q0sWu-prO7B4ZTtZKnR15khuaKSOwh8qRA1WqKAZAxpMIZ6MjDG-N31Wtkcp47WkhupEYPMIJozBwWe8hFIxjX-Ofgs-KnmN91ODZyjsPuG-IBcReGYsikAn0YexOE4mQczQiAkn4ALN9KWAzvl4drFi4PVR5yU1a5oHbr_o8Qx-4AkWniv6R1X0oe-4nPnUdSgPXNLWneX2ZbsVYetLVTb6rcHLfzCmLpKCKxNam5sRoS9BwP9bk8!/dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/ (accessed on 5th November 2018).

⁸ ALLAMANI, A. – BECCARIA, F. – EINSTEIN, S.: A Commentary on the Limits of Alcoholic Beverage Policies. In: *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, Volume 52, 2017, Issue 6, pp. 706–714.

⁹ REHM, J. – ŠTELEMĚKAS, M. – BADARAS, R.: Research Protocol to Evaluate the Effects of Alcohol Policy Changes in Lithuania, *Alcohol and Alcoholism*. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/alcalc/advance-article/doi/10.1093/alcalc/agy068/5107667> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

¹⁰ See: Act No I-857/ 1995 Coll. Law on alcohol control as last amended on 26 April 2018.

- The restriction of alcohol availability in shops was introduced (10 a.m.-8p.m. on Mon-Sat., 10 a.m.-3 p. m. on Sunday)
- Ban on alcohol advertising (including the full ban on TV, radio, internet, print media)

The Law also stipulates the procedure of enforcement of new anti-alcohol legal measures. The main responsibility for tackling violations will rest with the new-established special administrative body – the Department for Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol Control (Department), which is competent to execute control on compliance with Law.¹¹

The Lithuanian media reports about escalating controversy around the new alcohol law. It is important to note that the struggle against the anti-alcohol measures was very intense – it involved a massive media information campaign involving celebrities and health professionals, the promotion of industry-sponsored research and surveys in the public sphere, accusations of fake alcohol consumption statistics and the slander of Lithuania's name and reputation, attempts to refocus discussion towards personal responsibility and freedom, as well as treatment of persons with alcohol dependence (who should solely be the target of alcohol control measures).¹² The new alcohol-control policy measures are inconvenient for the alcohol industry, which tried to influence the Government and Parliament members. The society seemingly embraced those changes without much fuss, with some complaints in social media. In the beginning, there were more conflicts, mostly related to briefer alcohol retailing time, especially on weekends.¹³

In 2017, it was not the first time, when Lithuania try to change Law and restrict availability and advertisement of alcohol. In 2011, the Lithuanian government was not able to uphold alcohol advertising ban legislation, despite compelling scientific evidence and successful policy experience in the past due to pressure and lobbying by the alcohol industry.¹⁴ Before adopting new alcohol legislation, researchers in Lithuania made some scientific works and others are planned for the evaluation.¹⁵

2.3 The alcohol-advertising ban in Lithuania

The most radical change in the legislation is the newly instituted alcohol advertising ban.

This is a special measure of the youth protection state policy, focused mainly on minor's protection and healthy growth.¹⁶ Article 29 (1) Act No I-857/ 1995 Coll. Law on alcohol control as last

¹¹ Department for Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol Control is independent control central administrative body under directly Lithuanian Government, which main competences in the alcohol control are: supervision of the activities of the entities, prevention, harm reduction, etc. See: Official Website of the Department for Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol Control. Available at: <http://ntakd.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

¹² GOSTAUTAITĖ MIDTTUN, N.: *Alcohol advertising ban crowns comprehensive control measures adopted in Lithuania*. Available at: <http://www.ias.org.uk/Blog/Alcohol-advertising-ban-crowns-comprehensive-control-measures-adopted-in-Lithuania.aspx> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

¹³ GOSTAUTAITĖ MIDTTUN, N.: *Commentary: Life after big alcohol policy changes in Lithuania*. Available at: <http://eucam.info/2018/09/19/commentary-life-after-big-alcohol-policy-changes-in-lithuania/> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

¹⁴ PAUKŠTĖ, E. – LIUTKUTĖ, V. – ŠTELEMĖKAS, M. – GOŠTAUTAITĖ MIDTTUN, N. – VERYGA, A.: *Overturn of the proposed alcohol advertising ban in Lithuania*. Available at: <https://publications.lsmuni.lt/object/elaba:5653940/index.html> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

¹⁵ REHM, J. – ŠTELEMĖKAS, M. – BADARAS, R.: *Research Protocol to Evaluate the Effects of Alcohol Policy Changes in Lithuania, Alcohol and Alcoholism*. [online]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agy068> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

¹⁶ Lithuania. Available at: <http://eucam.info/regulations-on-alcohol-marketing/lithuania/> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

amended enacted the general ban on Alcohol advertising in the Republic of Lithuania, which prohibited every kind of alcohol advertising – on television, radio, internet, print media.

The Law lists exemptions that would not be considered advertising: brand names and logos at alcohol sales points, on equipment and supplies, company cars, etc., information for specialists, some packaging characteristics, as well as the accidental presentation of images during sports games and other events.¹⁷

The main intention of the alcohol advertising ban is to prevent alcohol attraction which could be caused by advertising. Department will be able to issue a mandatory decree for an immediate removal of any advertising material, by way of a court order.¹⁸

The new restrictions have brought new issues for magazines and newspapers. The owners and distributors of foreign magazines were confronted with the curious problem. The printers are forced to either tear out advertisements from foreign magazines or cover them up using stickers. In the practice, they cover up liquor advertisement on foreign magazines. If they fail to comply with new legislation, they can be fined by the Department.

On the other hand, Lithuania is not the only one country which enacted alcohol advertising ban. The EUCAM¹⁹ expert network confirms that countries with very restrictive alcohol advertising policies (like France, Norway, Iceland, and Sweden) do not experience problems with alcohol advertising in foreign journals.²⁰ But some countries like Norway and Iceland, enacted an exception within the Law for foreign publications in foreign languages, unless the main purpose of these magazines is alcohol advertising.²¹

2.4 Alcohol, alcohol advertising and Minors Protection

The main aim of amendments in Lithuanian alcohol control was protecting public health, especially young people.²² The alcohol consumption has a negative influence on health of underage people and thus on the development of future generations. Undoubtedly, the protection of young people shall be the primary interest of every country with undue consume of alcohol beverages.

Research data demonstrate the potential risk of alcohol consumption to the health of the young generation, connected with high mortality.²³

¹⁷ Article 29 Act No I-857/ 1995 Coll. Law on alcohol control as amended.

¹⁸ GOSTAUTAITE MIDTTUN, N.: Alcohol advertising ban crowns comprehensive control measures adopted in Lithuania. Available at: <<http://www.ias.org.uk/Blog/Alcohol-advertising-ban-crowns-comprehensive-control-measures-adopted-in-Lithuania.aspx>> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

¹⁹ European center for monitoring alcohol market.

²⁰ Organized panic in Lithuania after introduction of their new alcohol policy. Available at: <<https://eucam.info/2018/01/23/organized-panic-in-lithuania-after-introduction-of-their-new-alcohol-policy/>> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Statement of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania, Dr. Audrone Astrauskiene. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/alcohol/docs/ev_20171107_co11b_en.pdf> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

²³ See e.g.: FOLTRAN, F. – GREGORI, D. – FRANCHIN, L. – VERDUCI, E. – GIOVANNINI, M.: Effect of alcohol consumption in prenatal life, childhood, and adolescence on child development. In: *Nutr. Rev.*, 2011, 69, pp. 642–659. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-4887.2011.00417.x>> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

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Generally, alcohol advertising shows evidently greater appeal to adolescents, especially teenagers than adults. Younger people are more naive, easy to manipulate and accessible. Older viewers are more critical to advertising, their ranking is based on more criteria, and more complex.²⁴

The special researchers' works indicate that exposure to alcohol advertising is associated with increased positive beliefs about alcohol, intentions to drink, a likelihood of underage drinking, and increased consumption by young people.²⁵

Increasing identification with advertising produces changes in consumers' attitudes and behaviours.²⁶ Alcohol advertisements with greater youth appeal appear to have stronger influence on young peoples' drinking.²⁷

3 THE REGULATION OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING IN SLOVAKIA

The Slovak Republic has many similarities to Lithuania. Both post-soviet countries are situated in Eastern Europe which is in long-term the region with the highest burden of alcohol-attributable diseases,²⁸ as already mentioned.

In contrast to Lithuania, alcohol drinking in Slovakia has slowly declined. Since 2015, alcohol consumption in Slovakia decreased and in 2017 reached a minimum value,²⁹ unlike Lithuania and other countries.

In this place, I think, it is right to focus on the current Slovak regulation of alcohol advertising, because it is similar to previous Lithuanian legislation, which was enacted in 2007-2008 (ban on alcohol advertising during daytime in TV and radio).³⁰

²⁴ MESÁROŠOVÁ, B.: Výsledky výskumu. Available at: http://www.rvr.sk/_cms/data/download/mesarosova.pdf (accessed on 5th November 2018).

²⁵ AIKEN, A. – LAM, T. – GILMORE, W. – BURNS, L. – CHIKRITZHS, T. – LENTON, S. – LLOYD, B. – LUBMAN, D. – OGEIL, R. – ALLSOP, S.: Youth perceptions of alcohol advertising: are current advertising regulations working? In: *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 2018, 42, pp. 234-239. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1111%2F1753-6405.12792> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

²⁶ KRUGMAN, H.: The impact of television advertising: Learning without involvement. In: *Public Opin Q.* 1965, 29, 3, pp. 349–56. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/poq/article/29/3/349/1827420> (accessed on 5th November 2018).; SPIELMANN, N. – RICHARD, M.: How captive is your audience? Defining overall advertising involvement. In: *J Bus Res.*, 2013, 66, 4, pp. 499. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296311004097?via%3Dihub> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

²⁷ AIKEN, A. – LAM, T. – GILMORE, W. – BURNS, L. – CHIKRITZHS, T. – LENTON, S. – LLOYD, B. – LUBMAN, D. – OGEIL, R. – ALLSOP, S.: Youth perceptions of alcohol advertising: are current advertising regulations working? In: *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 2018, 42, pp. 234-239. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1111%2F1753-6405.12792> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

²⁸ REHM, J. – ŠTELEMĚKAS, M. – BADARAS, R.: Research protocol to evaluate the effects of alcohol policy changes in lithuania, alcohol and alcoholism. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agy068> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

²⁹ Štatistická ročenka Slovenskej republiky 2017. Available at: https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal!/ut/p/z1/tVFNb8IwDP01HEPcJm3SYxm0LFpsHXQXKY0TUYG_QA6GP9-7bTDPgTSDvPBsq1n6z0_LPASi1Ie7LNsbFXKTdunwn-asZgPBk4IwLwhxJNkOivuAwco4MV3AL-djyB-CO-i-YS2AA-Ly_uPWGChyqZuVjitsr1cofoa1a9ZD9q0sWu-prO7B4ZTtZKnR15khuaKSOwh8qRA1WqKAZAxpMIZ6MjDG-N31Wtkcp47WkhupEYPMIjozBwWe8hFLxjX-Ofgs-KnmN91ODZyjsPuG-IBcReGYsikaN0YexOE4mQczQiAkn4ALN9KWAzvl4drFi4PVR5yU1a5oHbr_o8Qx-4AkWNiv6R1X0oe-4nPnUdSgPXNLWneX2ZbsVYETLVtTb6rcHLfzCmLpKCKxNam5sRoSJ9BwP9bk8!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/ (accessed on 5th November 2018).

³⁰ REHM, J. – ŠTELEMĚKAS, M. – BADARAS, R.: Research protocol to evaluate the effects of alcohol policy changes in lithuania, alcohol and alcoholism. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agy068> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

In contrast with Lithuanian Law, the alcohol advertising in print media is not regulated in Slovakia just like advertising on the internet. Broadcasting alcohol advertising is in Slovak Law restricted by Act No. 308/2000 Coll. on Broadcasting and Retransmission and on the amendment of Act No. 195/2000 Coll. on Telecommunications as amended (ABR) which regulates television and radio broadcasting and retransmission in the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak ABR restricts broadcasting of alcohol advertisement by time limits. The regulation by time limits is identical with minor protection time limits. The regulation takes to account the negative alcohol influence on human health, especially on young's growth and health. Television advertising and teleshopping for alcoholic beverages, excluding beer and wine, shall be prohibited from 06.00 a.m. to 10.00 p. m.³¹ The Law divides regulation of "hard alcohol" and alcohol drinks with a lower content of alcohol. Television advertising and teleshopping for wine shall be prohibited from 06.00 a.m. to 8.00 p. m. The beer advertising as the exception of alcohol regulation shall be broadcasted without any restrictions.

The general provisions of Sec 31a (9) ABR states that advertising for alcoholic beverages must not be aimed at minors and must not encourage immoderate consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The permissible advertising and teleshopping for alcoholic beverages is subject to other restrictions. Broadcasting advertising shall not a) depict minors consuming these beverages, b) link consumption of alcoholic beverages to enhanced physical performance or to driving a motor vehicle, c) claim that alcoholic beverages have therapeutic qualities, or are a stimulant or sedative, or help in resolving personal problems, d) create the impression that consumption of alcohol contributes towards social and sexual success, e) encourage immoderate consumption of alcohol or depict abstinence or sobriety as a deficiency, f) emphasize a beverage's alcohol content as a mark of its quality.

The ban of minors acting in alcohol advertising corresponds with general prohibitions on the sale and delivery of alcoholic beverages to minors or otherwise allowing them to be used by persons under the age of 18.³² The purpose of other restrictions is the ban of advertising positive alcohol effects, which could result in increased consumption.³³ The Council for broadcasting and retransmission (Council) as the regulation body, imposes sanctions on broadcasters. In recent years, decision-making activity of Council has not shown any serious problem with breaking alcohol-advertising regulation and imposed only a few punishments.³⁴

It might be claimed that Slovak regulation of alcohol advertisement is effective and accepted by broadcasters and fulfils its main intention. The youths (especially children) should not be exposed by advertising, promoting "hard alcohol," during daily broadcasting. On the other side, alcohol marketers can promote their goods at night.

³¹ § 33 ods. 1 ABR.

³² § 2 (1) (a) Act No. 219/1996 Coll. on protection against the abuse of alcoholic beverages and on the establishment and operation of alcoholic containment rooms as amended.

³³ KUKLIŠ, L. – TARABČÁK, I.: Act on Broadcasting and Retransmission. Commentary. Bratislava: Wolters Kluwer, 2016, s. 460.

³⁴ E.g. in 2017, the council did not punish any subject for breaking § 33 (1), in 2016 only one subject and in 2015 only two subjects. See: Reports on the state of broadcasting and the activities of the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission for years 2015_2017. Available at: http://www.rvr.sk/sk/spravy/index.php?kategorieId=205&rozbalitClanky=205#clanky_205 (accessed on 5th November 2018).

4 IS THE RADICAL BAN THE BEST WAY HOW TO RESTRICT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION?

As mentioned, the Lithuanian Government decided for strict alcohol control regulation as a treatment of high consumption of alcoholic beverages. Many doubts and questions were raised by this measures.

Firstly, I am not sure whether “strict” legal restrictions are enough to change the minds of young people and make them avoid drinking of alcohol. The international studies indicate that general measures such as a ban on alcohol advertising have their limitation, and other social elements like family, school, and community, should be taken into account.³⁵ In my point of view, the young people, especially teenagers, are the most sensitive and open to trying and regularly use alcoholic drinks.

The youth is affected by the community of other underaged. In my opinion, if a minor enters the community of others, who consume alcoholic beverages, he will try it as a member of this group. On the other hand, parental control and family communication proved to play a protective role in the prevention of alcohol abuse.³⁶ The results of the Lithuanian study, published in 2017, demonstrate that family environment and parenting practices are critical components to be incorporated into prevention programmes on the prevention of alcohol use among the youth.

Another problem is the question of “ban effectivity.” Lithuania is a member state of the European Union, where there is the free movement of persons, services, and goods. Young Lithuanians could cross Lithuanian borders without any problems and find alcohol advertised in media as well as buy alcoholic beverages. The second question of “ban effectivity” is the problem of the internet as an international network. It is hard to say, how the Department can possibly control ban of alcohol on an international website.

It is also possible to find many negative opinions, e.g. as follows: The idea of prohibition is a classic example of tail-chasing. It is a short-sighted idea which can only get rid of the symptoms, facilitate ‘out of sight, out of mind’, but can never truly manage to cure the disease.³⁷

5 CONCLUSION

The way of alcohol regulation and measures for reducing consumption and alcohol drinking varies among countries and cultures. The Lithuanian Government decided to enacted strict prohibitions, like the general ban on alcohol advertising which was connected with negative reactions of the alcohol industry and media. The main intention of new prohibition is to protect public health, especially underaged people. Other countries, like Slovakia, restrict radio and television advertising by time limits and limits of a broadcasting content. Slovakian law regulates daily broadcasting

³⁵ SCHOR, E. L.: Family pediatrics: Report of the Task Force on the Family. In: *Pediatrics*, 2003, 111, pp. 1541–1571. Available at: http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/111/Supplement_2/1541.long (accessed on 5th November 2018).

³⁶ TODD, J. – SMITH, R. – LEVIN, K. – INCHLEY, J. – CURRIE, D. – CURRIE, C.: Family Structure and Relationships and Health among Schoolchildren. HBSC Briefing Paper 12. Available at: <<https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/2052>> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

³⁷ SAAHIL, P.: Why alcohol bans don't work. Available at: https://www.business-standard.com/article/punditry/why-alcohol-ban-in-bihar-is-likely-to-fail-115122900192_1.html (accessed on 5th November 2018).

of alcohol beverages with the intention to protect underaged people but to allow alcohol market to use night broadcasting.

I think that ban-regulation is not an effective way of regulation. The effectiveness of the law depends on acceptance and respect of people. Alcohol legislation, like any other legislation needs to be accepted by the public. Otherwise, the main intention of regulation shall not have the desired effect and people (especially youth) will find new ways how to evade Law and still use alcoholic beverages. In other words: Forbidden fruit tastes the sweetest.

In my point of view, law changes must correlate with socio-economic and democratic factors. The problems with high-consumption of alcohol can be solved only by changes in public attitudes, especially among the new generation, in political, media, social climate and in lifestyle choices.

The researchers do not have the same opinions on the problem. Using cross-country panel data from 13 European countries – including states of Central Europe – to investigate the effect of alcoholic beverage advertising ban and other control policies on alcohol demand during 1975 – 2000, a study has indicated that advertising bans do not reduce consumption, which casts doubt on the existence of a market-wide advertising-sales response function.³⁸

On the other hand, the new Lithuanian legislation is in force only a few months, so it is too early to evaluate the positive or negative influence on the high alcohol-attributable diseases, mortality and alcohol consumption, especially consumption by minors. The results will be shown in future years.

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³⁸ NELSON, J. P.: Alcohol advertising bans, consumption, and control policies in seventeen OECD countries, 1975–2000. In: *Applied Economics*, 2010, 42, 7, pp. 803–823. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/00036840701720952?scroll=top&needAccess=true> (accessed on 5th November 2018).

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