

# CARE & PREPARE

## The Brewers of Europe response to COVID-19



The Brewers of Europe

### Issue 2 – 24 April 2020

#### **Dear Members and colleagues,**

Welcome to the latest COVID-19 Care and Prepare newsletter of The Brewers of Europe!

As always, I wish to firstly send you my best thoughts and wishes. Whilst some countries are starting to show better numbers and even relax some of the lockdown policies, I am acutely aware that most countries are still suffering badly and the situation remains very sensitive also in those regions where there have been improvements.

Since the last newsletter, a number of countries have extended their lockdown periods, but setting roadmaps, timetables and criteria for lifting the containment measures is on the agenda across Europe, as it becomes clear that, with no vaccine widely available in the short to medium term, Europeans will have to get used to living with the threat of the coronavirus.

As for our daily work, like you I'm sure, your Brussels team is getting used to video conferences as the daily means of connecting, including with policymakers. And many of our Member Expert Groups and Issue Management Teams have met up virtually over recent weeks to ensure that The Brewers of Europe is able to meet the expectations and respond to the needs of our members.

Here below are some of the highlights of the latest goings-on in Brussels and around Europe on COVID-19 and the beer sector.

#### **EU publishes a roadmap for the lifting of containment measures**

*Following on from the Eurogroup's announcement of a €500bn package to support countries hit by the coronavirus, the European Commission, together with the President of the European Council, published last week a roadmap for gradually lifting some of the restrictive measures implemented to tackle the spread of the virus and get Europe back to some resemblance of normality.*

*Whilst recognising the specificities of national situations, the roadmap calls for a minimum of cooperation and coordination amongst countries. It is therefore a useful reference document for governments but also to guide our own requests, laying down the criteria, considerations and options for countries to gradually dismantle some of the restrictive measures, whilst continuing to closely monitor the situation to avoid any relaunch of the virus alongside a relaunch of the economy.*

Please find a link to the roadmap here: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_652](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_652)

## Continuing our campaign to save the pubs, bars and cafés needed to serve our beers

The Brewers of Europe has been continuing its media outreach to stress the importance of a vibrant, open hospitality sector for a flourishing brewing sector. We have been focusing on some of the steps that European and national policymakers should be taking now and in the short to medium terms to ensure that brewers still have an on-trade route to market through which to reach their consumers once governments start to relax some of the social distancing measures. Beer is key to horeca. Horeca is key to beer. And beer consumption in horeca is a vital part of Europe's economy, society and culture. Here below is an open editorial that I was invited to pen by Euractiv, one of the main Brussels EU media outlets:

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/opinion/saving-the-serving-sector-europes-cultural-heart-needs-protecting-during-lockdown/>

Our outreach was subsequently picked up by Politico, taking the message that brewers and pubs need a sustainable, managed exit strategy as soon as it is safe:

<https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/politico-eu-influence/politico-eu-influence-the-brussels-effect-brewer-demands-green-recovery/>

## The Brewers of Europe Board member meets the EU's Industry Commissioner

Following up on The Brewers of Europe President's letter to the five EU Presidents, we managed to secure a seat for one of our Board members at an exclusive table discussing the challenges of COVID-19 for the food industry. Invited by Thierry Breton, the EU's Industry Commissioner, Christian Weber, CEO of the Karlsberg Brauerei was virtually seated alongside the CEOs of Unilever, Danone, Metro and Kraft, the four other companies selected by the Commission.

The European Commission's post-meeting report to The Brewers of Europe indicated that they have clearly understood the vital role for brewers of the hospitality sector and the need, also for other sectors such as brewing, to guarantee its future. Our takeaways: continue stressing the importance of bars, pubs and cafés to Europe's economy; emphasise the impact and importance of the value chain, especially the brewers currently taking a huge hit. Thank you Christian for making yourself available at such short notice and in such difficult circumstances, to represent The Brewers of Europe!

## Member engagement on the hospitality campaign: Bulgaria focus

The Union of Bulgarian Brewers (UBB) attracted impressive press coverage, translating and sharing with media the full text of The Brewers of Europe letter to the 5 EU Presidents. The UBB focused on the threat of the limited economic activity in the country bringing down not just the on-trade but the business of Bulgarian breweries to levels unseen in decades. Not only did the 20% of the market represented by on-trade disappear from one day to the next but retail sales also declined. Thank you Ivana for sharing news on your activities and the press coverage generated.

## Support to bars, pubs and cafés: Poland focus

With beer kegs sitting in cellars, unsold and going past its best before date, the Polish Brewers launched a mass collection from thousands of horeca establishments across the country. With up to 70,000 kegs stored in bars across the country, the recovery of the kegs is expected to save the Polish hospitality sector around 3 million euros. Other support includes extended payment terms for partners, allowing increased financial liquidity, and a continued professional service for draft beer systems to ensure bars are able to serve fresh beer along clean lines whenever businesses reopen. This is also yet another example to show how beer and brewers are part of a wider ecosystem and value chain that affects thousands of businesses and hundreds of thousands of jobs. Thank you Bartek and Olga for sharing.

## Toolkit on dealing with perished beer in cellars: UK focus

With kegs left languishing in pub cellars following the overnight and long-term closure of pubs, dealing with the full kegs can be a major challenge, with implications both for tax recovery and for the environment if dealt with incorrectly. Whilst some brewers will be in a position to uplift and replace the kegs, this is not always possible. The British Beer & Pub Association has therefore produced a best practice for dealing with the destruction of beer in cellars - <https://beerandpub.com/briefings/best-practice-for-destruction-of-beer-in-cellars/>. This and other key tools can also be found on The Brewers of Europe Knowledge Centre in a dedicated COVID-19 section. Please keep on sharing your toolkits and other assets that can be made available to the wider membership. See: [Covid19 Knowledge Centre webpage](#)

## Daily tracker of COVID-19 health and business support measures, including horeca support initiatives and exit strategies

Together with support from the membership, the Secretariat continues to track on a daily basis the latest news on measures put in place to prevent spread of the virus and alleviate the impact on businesses and livelihoods of the drastic measures.

The newest edition of the tracker now seeks to in particular gather information on the exit strategies being developed within countries and the support measures being put in place notably for the hospitality sector, which looks like being one of the trickiest to open up within an ongoing social distancing policy. Please help us keep [0920SG](#) updated as it is a key tool for sharing information that depends on everyone's solidarity. See here the two new devoted trackers on the on-trade ([1020SG](#)) and exit strategies ([1120SG](#)).

## Towards a Green Recovery

Whilst the attention of everyone, policymakers and brewers included, is on COVID-19, focus is also turning to the exit strategy and the concept of a #GreenRecovery has picked up support from the European Commission, Parliament and many members of the Council of Member States. One such interesting initiative was launched in the European Parliament last week and also brings together businesses and NGOs. More information on the Green Recovery Alliance to be seen here: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/green-recovery-alliance-launched-in-european-parliament/>. We therefore continue to work in the background also on our environmental sustainability campaign, which was intended to be launched at the Brewers' Forum, with The Brewers of Europe as an official partner of the EU's Green Week (also postponed). Continue to watch this space as the drive for a Green Recovery continues...

## WHO Euro breaks ranks with WHO Global on COVID-19 and alcohol

Whilst WHO Global issued balanced advice, cautioning that drinking alcohol offers no protection against COVID-19 and stressing that frequent or excessive alcohol consumption can increase health risks, WHO Euro Region's advice went way further, calling for governments to enforce measures which limit alcohol consumption. Whilst the WHO Euro Region's extreme position on alcohol policy is not new, it is regrettable that they have seized the opportunity of the current crisis to launch an attack on alcohol consumption per se and call for further restrictions.

With the shutdown of the horeca sector and all other social gathering opportunities already having a catastrophic effect on beer sales, The Brewers of Europe does not intend to directly counter WHO Euro but will not hesitate to share national data, as it comes in from members, on the extent to which beer consumption has already declined, countering the misleading narrative in some media articles that somehow the drinks sector, including brewing companies, is profiting from the crisis.

## **National Association Secretaries General meeting to focus on COVID-19**

*Finally, with the global pandemic forcing The Brewers of Europe to cancel its Forum and postpone the General Assembly meeting until after the summer, the Secretaries General of the National Associations will meet together for an extraordinary video-conference on 28 April, focused on COVID-19. As each country fights its battle against the virus and now also reflects on the ways and means to lift the shutdown measures, there is great value in members sharing their insights on the situation and good practices to support the brewers. Solidarity within the brewing community is key and The Brewers of Europe is grateful for the role it can play in ensuring that members continue to learn from each other.*

Please continue to stay in contact, share with us your news and update our trackers to help ensure the brewing sector collectively exits the current crisis in the best condition and manner possible.

Please also don't hesitate to advise if you would like us to share your news wider, through our social media channels but also as we continue engagement with media and policymakers alike.

Thank you for your attention.

Kind regards,  
Pierre-Olivier

#StayHomeStaySafe