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AUDIOVISUAL AND DIGITAL ALCOHOL MARKETING: REGULATION AND YOUTH EXPOSURE IN LITHUANIA



CREDITS

The comparison of International Alcohol Control Policies with a focus on Audiovisual and Digital Alcohol Marketing (CIPPAL-ADAM) was carried out by a wide partnership of research-oriented organisations. The interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the OFDT. The OFDT assumes no responsibility for the opinions expressed or for any errors or omissions contained herein.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

IN A FEW POINTS **5**

INTRODUCTION **6**

METHOD **7**

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING REGULATION **9**

Foundation and rationale of alcohol advertising regulations 9

Implementation story 9

Triggers, levers, arguments, general political environment around alcohol control *10*

Implementation challenges and stakeholder reactions *10*

Recent developments (2022–2024) *11*

Regulations on alcohol advertising in force in 2024 11

Statutory provisions and scope of the ban *11*

Self-regulation by economic stakeholders 13

Synopsis of the regulation on alcohol marketing in 2024 13

Control systems and enforcement in 2024 13

Enforcement mechanisms and stakeholders *13*

Cross-sector collaboration *14*

Supporting measures and public awareness *15*

Strengths and weaknesses *15*

Opportunities and threats *16*

YOUTH'S PERCEPTIONS ON ADAM AND ITS ROLE IN ALCOHOL DRINKING **17**

Digital culture and attitudes towards digital advertising 17

Digital media use, advertising awareness, and perceived digital literacy *17*

Attitudes towards digital advertising in general *17*

Attitudes towards ISN and platform-based content *18*

Advertising and marketing: what comes most to mind? 18

The most remembered alcohol advertising *18*

Main features and motives for remembering *19*

ADAM exposure: perceived effects and attitudes 20

Perceived level of alcohol marketing exposure via Digital or other channels *20*

Attitudes towards alcohol advertising exposure *21*

Perceived impact of advertising and the channels with the greatest impact *21*

Experiences and attitudes towards different types of advertising *22*

Confusion regarding non-alcoholic beverages being advertised *22*

Knowledge and attitudes towards alcohol regulation 23

Knowledge of alcohol control policies and marketing regulation *23*

Acceptability of alcohol marketing regulation and alcohol control policies *23*

Perceived effectiveness of regulations *24*

Suggestions to improve alcohol prevention *24*

Attitudes towards drinking and main drivers of drinking 24

Personal attitudes to alcohol and perceived risks *24*

Role of peers and social environment *25*

Role of family and cultural traditions *26*

Accessibility of alcohol *27*

EXPOSURE TO ADAM **28**

Digital and TV exposure to positive portrayal of alcohol 28

Vectors of online of exposure to positive portrayal *29*

Vectors of TV exposure to positive portrayal *30*

Digital and TV exposure to alcohol advertising 31
Vectors of online of exposure to alcohol advertising *33*
Attitudes towards digital alcohol advertising *34*
Impact of the last remembered alcohol advertising 35
Memorising advertised alcohol brand *35*
Desire to drink generated *36*
Perceived effectiveness of alcohol advertising on the Internet among young people *36*
General opinion and acceptance of alcohol control policies 38
General opinion on alcohol advertising *38*
Knowledge of regulation on alcohol advertising towards MINORS *39*
Acceptance of advertising regulation *39*
GENERAL CONCLUSION 40
Awareness of the exposure to alcohol advertising 40
The role of ADAM in motivations to drink alcohol 40
Impact of regulations in the national framework 41
REFERENCES 42

IN A FEW POINTS

This study investigated the perceived exposure of young adults and underaged to alcohol advertising and positive portrayals of alcohol across various media platforms, combining survey data and qualitative interviews. The findings provide important insights for further improvements of alcohol control policy framework in Lithuania and improving protection of minors and young people from alcohol marketing.

- **Qualitative study** identified high exposure to overall alcohol related content, but most interviewees struggled to recall specific alcohol advertisements. Survey data indicates high levels of exposure, while qualitative interviews confirmed that most advertisements recalled were for non-alcoholic beverages and exposure was perceived as not engaging attention.
- **Social media as primary digital channel:** social media platforms are the main channel for exposure to alcohol related content and advertising in Lithuania.
- **Confusion due to alibi-advertising** for non-alcoholic beverages. There was lot of confusion with alcoholic brands that also produce non-alcoholic versions of their products. In many cases a brand was remembered after seeing a non-alcoholic beverage advertisement. Most exposure was to this type of advertisement and content in relation to sports events, sale-point marketing.
- **Perceived personal control and underestimated influence of advertising:** most interviewees were confident in their ability to recognise and avoid influence from marketing and advertising towards their behaviour. While most thought that other (more vulnerable) people could be impacted significantly, most dismissed effects on themselves.
- High perception of general and social alcohol harm, with low specific knowledge about health harms.
- **Marketing tools beyond advertising** contribute to noticing information related to alcohol: price incentives and discounts were readily noticed and remembered by young people**.**
- **Limited awareness of legal regulations, but wide support for control measures:** most interviewees were aware, but unsure about the advertising ban and other legal alcohol control regulations. Majority of interviewees are positive towards stricter regulations and better protection of minors and young people.
- **Policy implications:** current regulations provide limited protection from exposure to alcohol advertising. Lithuanian policy ambitions should focus on preventing or reducing alibi-marketing using non-alcoholic beverages.

INTRODUCTION

“The World Health Organisation (WHO) and its Member States regard strategies to regulate the commercial availability of alcohol as essential public health measures. (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2021). At global level, the ban on the sale of alcohol to minors (generally aged under 18) and restrictions on alcohol advertising are essential levers, and the rigour with which these provisions are applied is a crucial issue. The health authorities recommend regulating marketing practices to protect minors, in particular limiting the use of certain media and the subjects that can be exploited in advertising (PAHO, 2017 ; WHO, 2018, 2019). In Europe, these measures can vary from country to country, as can the types of alcohol to which they apply. As self-regulation by alcohol producers and advertisers is contrary to their economic interests and therefore unlikely to be effective in protecting minors from advertising (Pierce et al., 2019), bodies independent of the alcohol industry should be entrusted with the task of monitoring compliance with the law in this area.

Given the multifactorial complexity of the responses implemented, it is essential for states to better distinguish what can be learned from specific national experiences and trajectories in the implementation of alcohol control policies. Thus, in November 2024, with the financial support of the *Fonds de lutte contre les addictions (FLCA, French Fund for combatting addiction)*, the French Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Addictions (OFDT) launched a comparison of International of Alcohol Control Policies (CIPPAL), with a focus on Audiovisual and Digital Alcohol Marketing (ADAM). This study is referred here by the acronym ‘CIPPAL-ADAM aimed at describing and comparing the factors and patterns of young people's exposure to audiovisual and digital alcohol marketing in six European countries: Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Switzerland. The CIPPAL-ADAM study was carried out over 2024 and 2025, by six European organisations with an expertise in mixed methods (universities, advocacy or research bodies), following a common methodology under OFDT coordination.

This monograph summarises the study results for Lithuania. It thus includes contextual data on the Lithuanian system of regulation and control regarding audiovisual and digital alcohol advertising as well as results on young people’s attitudes towards this type of advertising and their exposure to advertising.

Alcohol consumption among Lithuanian teenagers

In **Lithuania**, alcohol remains the most widely used psychoactive substance, including among adolescents. The consumption trend is declining among young people for over two decades: according to ESPAD data in 2003 lifetime use among adolescents aged 15-16 was 97.9%, past 30 days consumption - 77.1% vs in 2024 72,6%, and 24.4% respectively. Reduced consumption trend is steeper among boys than girls. There is no data on alcohol advertisement exposure for any age group in Lithuania.

METHOD

The general objective of CIPPAL-Alcohol Marketing is to show how young people in the six countries compare in their way of identifying and being exposed to audiovisual and digital marketing techniques. In other words, the study assesses the empowering capacity (marketing awareness) and the protective nature (less exposure) of different control systems, from a comprehensive statutory system (Lithuania) to less restrictive statutory systems (Finland, France) or more liberal systems appealing to self-regulation by economic players (Ireland, Italy, Switzerland). To this end, investigators have pursued four operational objectives to be declined in each country case:

- Describe the national regulations – legal/statutory restrictions and/or industry self-regulation –- on alcohol marketing (AM) via audio-visual and digital media and the related control and enforcement framework.
- Assess the knowledge, acceptability and attitudes of minors and young adults regarding the national AM regulation and how they perceived its efficacy/role in reducing incentives to purchase and consumption, peer or family pressure to drink alcohol, etc.
- Analyse how minors and young adults perceive their exposure to AM via the audiovisual media and the Internet, considering various explanatory variables (age, gender, drinking status.

Investigators have implemented a mixed method based on a documentary analysis on the regulations, sociological interviews on norms and perceptions and a web survey on ADAM exposure and related factors. The recruiting and data collection methods were submitted to the internal ethical procedure of each partner.

The review of the national regulation system of alcohol marketing was based on agreed guidelines with regards to types of sources, bibliographic databases, keyword sets and search strategies. The selection of references followed the PRISMA rules for traceability.

Data collection has targeted young people aged between 16 and 19 for semi-structured interviews. Selection criteria based on age (minors and adults), gender, alcohol consumption and socio-economic background (parents' profession) were applied when recruiting interviewees, in order to achieve a diversity of profiles. Multi-channel recruiting was used (via social media, by direct soliciting or via a poll firm) and prior parental consent was required for minor respondents. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and anonymised. Data was processed with Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (Atlas.ti or Nvivo 14-15).

For the web survey, samples varied in number between countries, with three larger samples for Finland, France and Italy. Sampling was based on common quotas applied to respondents belonging to access panels, with a minimum target of 30% minors in each national sample and an age range extended from 15 to 21, for reasons of feasibility. Common quotas referred to gender (men, women) cross-referenced with age (minors, adults), activity (schooling vs employment). For the three larger samples, additional quotas related to more detailed categories of schooling, the size of urban unit, region and the parents' occupation were applied. Final data were weighted on the basis of these quota criteria.

Incentives worth 15 euros on average were awarded to young people interviewees and panel respondents to the web survey. The final samples of the set of interviews and web survey are respectively detailed in Tables 1 and 2, for Lithuania.

Table 1. Sampling for interviews-Lithuania

		N
Total sample		**20**
Age	16-18	7
	18-19	13
Average age	/	17,9
Gender	Male	10
	Female	10
	Non binary	0
Area	Rural	1
	Urban	19
Last month use	Never	3
	1-2 times	15
	Once a week or so	2
	Everyday or so	0
Lifetime non drinker	/	0
First drink	With relatives	5
	With friends	14
	Never	0
	Alone	1
Average age (first drink)	/	14,2
Drunkenness	Yes	16
	Not	4
Economic situation	Not well-off	0
	Fairly well-off	11
	Very well-off	9

Table 2. Sampling for the web survey-Lithuania

		N	%
Total sample		**419**	**100**
Age	15-17	125	30
	18-21	294	70
Average age	/	18.7	-
Gender	Male	197	47
	Female	216	52
	Non binary and other	6	1
Male	15-17	45	11
	18-21	152	36
Female	15-17	51	12
	18-21	165	40
Non binary and other	15-17	1	0
	18-21	5	1
Drinking status	Non drinkers	141	40
	Drinkers	278	60
	Occasional drinkers	*71*	*17*
	Regular drinkers	*207*	*49*
Socio-economic categories	Superior category	156	37
	Intermediate category	263	63
	Lower category	0	0
Education	Higher education	108	26
	General secondary school	126	30
	Other secondary school	46	11
Activity	At school, univesity	270	64
	Employed	87	21
	Inactive	43	10

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING REGULATION

Foundation and rationale of alcohol advertising regulations

Alcohol advertising and marketing in Lithuania is regulated by the Law on Alcohol Control (the Law), thus grounding the issue in the area of public health since its adoption in 1995. The Law explicitly prioritizes reducing alcohol harm. The purpose of the Law is stated as reducing alcohol consumption, availability (especially for the underaged), reducing alcohol abuse and harm towards health and economy, as well as providing legal framework regulating production, sale, import and export of alcohol. The Article 3 of the Law specifically outlines the control policy measures, including *"*restrictions to *promote sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages"* and *"prohibition of promotion to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages by youth"* [1]. Thus, Law establishes restrictive measures towards marketing and promotion as part of comprehensive alcohol control policy.

The Law states unambiguously that alcohol advertising in Lithuania is prohibited. The term alcohol advertising is defined very broadly under the Law. It encompasses "the dissemination of information in any form and by any means, that promotes the purchase and/or consumption of alcohol products" [1].

Law dictates provisions on ADAM (advertising, product placement, branding, etc.). This broad definition means that all traditional advertisements (TV commercials, billboards, print ads, etc.), as well as indirect marketing like product placements, promotional events, or digital content, fall under regulation if they serve to promote alcohol purchase or consumption. In Lithuania regulations cover **all forms of alcohol marketing communications** – from direct advertisements to sponsorships, branded merchandise, product placements, and online content. The Law lists specific information delivery forms that are not considered alcohol advertising [1].

There are specific measures in the Law designed to protect children and youth from marketing and consumption promotion, which also align with broader policy measures such as raising the legal drinking age in 2018 to 20 from 18. In addition to the full ban on alcohol advertising instituted in 2018, the Law specifically bans using minors or young adults under age of 20 in promotion activities of any alcoholic beverages. There are also significant availability restrictions: underaged are not allowed to sell alcohol, selling is prohibited in educational institutions and for shops with significant proportion of children goods. Also, shops must ask for ID for anyone that looks under 25. All these measures are aimed at reducing youth exposure and access to alcohol. The comprehensive marketing restrictions are thus part of a wider strategy to change the culture around alcohol, delay initiation of drinking among youth, and reduce overall consumption [1].

Implementation story

The Lithuanian road towards a comprehensive ban on alcohol advertising has been winding and marked by alternating periods of strict controls and liberalization, influenced by political and economic factors. Immediately after regaining independence in the 1990, there was a very weak alcohol control (a regulatory "vacuum"), during which alcohol consumption rapidly increased, while mortality and other public health indicators deteriorated. The first wave of modern alcohol control policy began around 1994–1997, when Lithuania introduced foundational measures including taxation, limits on availability, and **initial restrictions on advertising** [2].

The first Law on Alcohol Control (passed in 1995) also contained a provision for a full ban on alcohol advertising. However, there was no capacity in the state at the time to enforce all the ambitious restrictions outlined in the policy and soon after adoption, successful attempts to weaken the control policy began.

Even though in 1997, a Constitutional Court ruling upheld the right of the state to restrict alcohol advertising based on public health interest, but the political will was strongly refocusing towards defending business interest.

From 1998 to 2007, Lithuania experienced a period of **liberalization** of alcohol marketing, responding to industry pressure. For example, by 2000–2003, content and placement restrictions were loosened: alcohol ads for beverages under 22% ABV were allowed, outdoor ads for beer/wine were permitted (warnings required only for spirits), also display of alcohol in event venues (concerts, cinemas) became legal [2]. During this time, fines for illegal advertising were reduced and **numerous exceptions** introduced.

In response to the liberalization and increasing alcohol harm advocacy of NGOs and civil society has helped create a new interest in control policy. In 2008, alarmed by rising alcohol harm indicators Parliament swung back toward restriction, albeit very limited, and passed a ban on alcohol advertisements on TV/radio from 6 AM to 11 PM. As a conciliatory compromise a *total advertising ban* was slated to begin in 2012, leaving ample time for industry to prepare. However, the full ban never took effect: in December 2011, just weeks before implementation, the ban was **revoked** under barrage of an intense industry lobbying effort. This episode focused public attention towards alcohol control policy and put in the limelight industries lobbying activities and methods [3].

Triggers, levers, arguments, general political environment around alcohol control

In 2010 Lithuania had the highest per capita alcohol consumption levels in the world and experienced very high alcohol attributable harm [4]. Alarming mortality and morbidity indicators, combined with accumulating evidence from the World Health Organization (WHO) and public health experts, created a strong impetus for change. This has strengthened the voice of public and organizations such as the Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition. Public support for stricter alcohol control had also grown: a citizen-led campaign “For Sober Lithuania” gathered over 60,000 signatures to demand mandatory deliberations in the Parliament of the proposed strict alcohol control policy measures. Also, a party won elections in 2016, which specifically focused reduction of alcohol consumption with stricter regulation as part of their political program. Backed by this political momentum and guided by WHO “best buy” recommendations, the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) in 2017 adopted a comprehensive package of alcohol control measures, with major provisions coming into effect on January 1, 2018.

The *2018 alcohol control reforms* included: raising the legal drinking age to 20, shortening retail hours, increasing excise tax, and implementing a **near-total ban on alcohol advertising** in all media. This legislative victory did not come easily. By all accounts, the alcohol industry and affiliated commercial lobbies *“fought tooth and nail”* to prevent these restrictions. The political environment was highly charged, pitting public health evidence against economic and commercial arguments. Nevertheless, Lithuanian lawmakers, *“against all odds and with a broad coalition,”* succeeded in passing what became regarded as one of the strictest alcohol advertising laws in the world [4]. The new law was internationally lauded – the WHO **commended** Lithuania’s strategy and early results showed declines in alcohol consumption and related harms, alongside increased government revenue from taxes [4].

Implementation challenges and stakeholder reactions

Once the near-total advertising ban took effect in 2018, compliance by domestic businesses was generally high – alcohol ads vanished from Lithuanian TV, radio, print, and internet outlets virtually overnight [3]. However, there was an attempt to immediately amend the law, and it was generated by a media operator: importers of foreign magazines. Many magazines produced in foreign languages but sold in Lithuania, contained alcohol advertisements, which became illegal under the new amendments. Distributors responded with very public demonstrations of senselessness of such restrictions by

physically removing or obscured pages and ridiculing the measures in public in major media outlets. The focus of the efforts was to shame politicians in accepting that the measures are ridiculous and demanding amendments to make such ads an exemption. Rather than immediately amending the law to exempt foreign publications, authorities allowed a period of adjustment. Health advocates also helped: the Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition consulted international partners (NordAN network) and recommended not to accept explanatory amendments. [3] Ultimately, the distributors ceased their page-ripping tactics, the proposed legal change was dropped, allowing the comprehensive ban to stand intact. This episode revealed competing interests and focus of state institutions: while Ministry of Economy was drafting new amendments responding to industry complaints, the Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department was discussing with civil society on how best protect public health interests.

Overall, Lithuanian alcohol control law is one of the most amended, and this is the arena where political parties and politicians reveal themselves on their pro **public health stance vs industry interests**. Now Lithuania is implementing all three WHO "best buy" interventions (tax increases, advertising bans, and availability restrictions) and achieving substantial public health benefits in decreased specific mortality, suicide, accidents, and other alcohol related harm, as well as increased tax revenue. This success has helped solidify public support for the regulations and achieve converging understanding in the state that alcohol tax increase in beneficial to the economy.

There was a broad coalition of civil society, researchers and university teams, relevant state agencies, such as Drug, Tobacco and alcohol control department and Ministry of Health that were focused on public health interest. The other side included a broad coalition of industry operators, not only alcohol producers, importers and retailers, but also media, event's organizers, economists and state institutions, such as ministry of Economy and Innovation.

Recent developments (2022–2024)

Even the most comprehensive a "world-class" policy is not immune to erosion. In 2022 and 2023, some government members proposed rolling back parts of the alcohol law, influenced by economic arguments and industry lobbying. Most of the proposed amendments were not adopted, such as lowering the drinking age back to 18, extending sales hours, etc. But there were new additions to the **exemptions on which information is not considered advertising:** alcoholic beverages visible in food delivery platforms, drink and food pairing advice, information about the awards that companies receive for the beverages and information about the technologies of production and traditions. The tension between economic stakeholders seeking more marketing freedom and health advocates defending the stricter status quo remains an ongoing dynamic in Lithuania's alcohol policy landscape.

Regulations on alcohol advertising in force in 2024

Despite the minor 2024 amendments, Lithuania maintains one of the most restrictive alcohol marketing bans in the world. Below is an overview of the **statutory regulations in force in December 2024** regarding alcohol advertising, promotion and related marketing (ADAM"- Alcohol **Advertising**, **Distribution** of branded materials, **Alcohol** product placement, **Marketing** in general).

Statutory provisions and scope of the ban

Comprehensive Advertising Ban: Since January 2018, Lithuania has implemented a **ban on alcohol advertising** in all media and formats. By law, *"Alcohol advertising is prohibited in the Republic of Lithuania."* This prohibition covers **television, radio, print media, outdoor billboards, cinemas, and internet/digital media** – no commercial alcohol ads are allowed in any of these channels. The ban

extends to both direct advertisements and indirect promotional communications. For example, **sponsorship of events by alcohol brands is banned** (sports or cultural sponsorship that promotes alcohol is not permitted), **promotional items** bearing alcohol branding can only be distributed at points of sale (they cannot be freely given out off premises). In practical terms, this means one should not encounter any alcohol commercials on Lithuanian TV/radio, no alcohol ads in newspapers or magazines printed in Lithuanian, no alcohol billboards on the streets, no alcohol adverts in local cinemas, and no paid alcohol promotions targeting Lithuanian users on the internet.

Allowed Information (Exemptions): the law also describes information that **is not considered advertising**, allowing limited communication in specific contexts. As of 2024, the following are *permitted* forms of alcohol-related information, provided they stick to factual details and certain platforms:

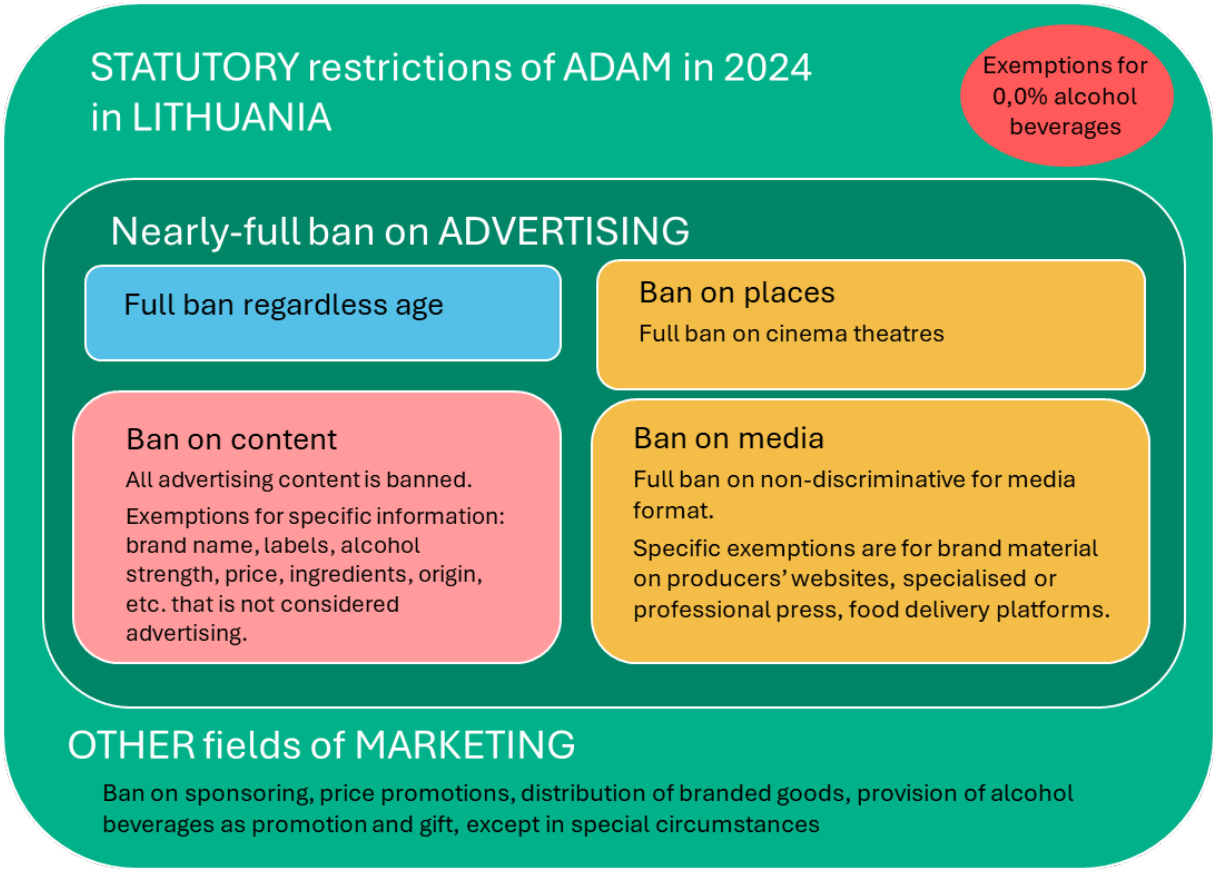
- **Product Information on Labels and Packaging:** Labels on alcoholic beverage containers (and the packaging itself) display information like brand name, type of drink, alcohol content, origin, etc., which is allowed. Such mandatory or descriptive labelling is not considered advertising.
- **Factual Data on Producer/Seller Websites:** Companies producing or selling alcohol may publish factual information about their products on their **official websites**, limited to specifics such as the product's name and type, the producer's name, the trademark, alcohol strength, ingredients and other labelling information, the geographic origin, price, etc. A producer's web page can have a catalogue of their beverages with technical details. However, even on these sites, **promotional language is not allowed** – the content must remain informational (e.g. "ABV 40%, produced by XYZ Distillery in 2023") rather than marketing slogans.
- **Trade Publications and Professional Communications:** Information intended for specialists (for instance, publications for the alcohol industry or communications to traders) is generally not considered advertising under the law.
- Use of a company's name/trademark on its premises or vehicles.
- **Point-of-Sale Information:** Within licensed retail premises, alcohol products can be displayed along with factual tags (name, price, etc.), and functional promotions like price lists or catalogues can be available to customers at the point of sale. Price announcements or discounts *outside* the store, however, are prohibited (the law bans public announcements of alcohol price reductions). So, while a shop can mark a discounted price on the shelf, it cannot advertise that discount through mass media or flyers.
- **Non-Alcoholic Variants:** Notably, the advertising ban **does not apply to alcohol-free beer and wine**. These 0.0% ABV products are exempt from the law's definition of alcoholic beverages. Thus, marketing alcohol-free beer/wine is allowed.
- **2024 New Exceptions:** In May 2024, the Seimas added that certain content on **online food delivery platforms** and similar digital services will *not* be deemed alcohol advertising. Specifically, information on *"food and drink pairings"* (for example, a restaurant or delivery app suggesting which wine goes with a meal), information about awards or medals that a beverage or producer has won, and descriptions of production methods or traditions, are now allowed on such platforms or websites.
- Other facets of the ban include prohibitions on **promotional games, lotteries, gifts, or discounts** related to alcohol. The law explicitly bans practices such as giving alcohol as a gift or prize, distributing free samples (except modest tastings in controlled settings), coupon promotions, or any contests that incentivize buying alcohol.

In summary, Lithuania's statutory provisions in 2024 amount to a **near-total ban on alcohol advertising and promotion**, with only narrowly defined informational exceptions. The aim is that the public should not encounter *any* inducement to purchase alcohol through mass media or public channels.

Self-regulation by economic stakeholders

Given the blanket statutory ban, there is little room for industry self-regulation codes on advertising content. Historically, there were very few self-regulatory initiatives. One, for instance, the Lithuanian Brewers Association adopted a code of conduct for beer marketing back in 2004, mostly focused on targeting minors [5]. However, after 2018 any industry self-regulation became obsolete. There are efforts to spin-off social responsibility initiatives, related to climate change and pollution. There is no active self-regulatory system for alcohol ads in 2024 beyond compliance with the law, and compliance is monitored by relevant institutions, rather than industry operators.

Synopsis of the regulation on alcohol marketing in 2024



Control systems and enforcement in 2024

Enforcement mechanisms and stakeholders

Enforcing Lithuania's alcohol advertising restrictions is the responsibility of designated governmental bodies, primarily the **Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department (NTAKD)**. NTAKD is a state agency with authority to monitor compliance and impose sanctions for violations of alcohol advertising and marketing regulations. They also advice influencers who are making digital content regarding what is considered alcohol advertising. Upon becoming aware of an illegal advertisement, NTAKD can initiate administrative proceedings against the offending company (e.g. fines, orders to cease the activity).

For **digital media enforcement**, Lithuania has empowered NTAKD (in coordination with courts) to act swiftly. If an alcohol advertisement is published online targeting Lithuanian consumers – regardless of

where the website is hosted – NTAKD can issue a notification and ask a court to order its removal. Courts are required to review such requests within 3 days and can authorize blocking or taking down the content. In practice, NTAKD works with internet service providers to **block websites or social media pages** that carry illicit alcohol ads directed at Lithuania.

In the realm of **physical media**, enforcement responsibilities are sometimes shared. Historically, local municipalities were tasked with overseeing outdoor advertising compliance, while NTAKD handled national media and overall enforcement. With the total ban, enforcement mainly means ensuring no ads pop up anywhere. If a billboard or poster did appear, local authorities and NTAKD inspectors would intervene to have it removed and fine the responsible party. Television and radio broadcasters, as well as print publishers, all know not to accept alcohol ads; any breach would be evident and subject to penalties.

Penalties: Violations of the advertising ban can lead to fines and other administrative penalties. Earlier in the 2000s, fines for alcohol advertising violations were reduced during a liberal phase, but with the 2018 overhaul, penalties were presumably stiffened to dissuade any transgressions (the exact fine amounts are set in administrative offense codes). Repeat violations could potentially risk a company's alcohol license as well. However, given strong compliance culture since 2018, blatant violations have been rare.

Key stakeholders in enforcement include, besides NTAKD and local authorities, the **Ministry of Health** (which oversees alcohol control policy broadly) and the **Ministry of Economy and Innovation** (which in 2024 took interest in loosening some rules). There is a certain tension in upholding the Law: while the Health Ministry and NTAKD focus on upholding the restrictions, the Economy Ministry's favours flexibility for business. Nonetheless, formally, all government bodies are expected to uphold the law in their domain.

Judicial courts are also stakeholders in the enforcement process, as they must act on NTAKD requests to remove online content, and adjudicate any appeals by companies against penalties. To date, the courts have generally supported the enforcement of advertising restrictions.

Cross-sector collaboration

Inter-agency cooperation is an important aspect of effective enforcement. NTAKD often coordinates with agencies like the **Consumer Rights Protection Service** and communications regulators to monitor advertising, especially in the digital sphere. For instance, if an alcohol ad were to appear on television (under jurisdiction of the Radio and Television Commission) or on a social network, NTAKD would inform those media regulators and the platform to ensure removal. Furthermore, customs and police might play a role in some cases.

In terms of broader **cross-sector collaboration to support the alcohol advertising ban**, Lithuania's approach has benefited from partnerships beyond government alone. The WHO Regional Office for Europe has actively worked with Lithuanian authorities, providing data and expertise to refine policies and facilitating exchanges of best practices, as well as getting involved in advocacy networks for maintaining the "Best buy" policies, including the advertising ban.

Non-governmental organizations and civil society have also been key partners. The **Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition**, an umbrella NGO, has worked closely with government stakeholders by monitoring policy implementation and mobilizing public support. For example, during the 2018 magazine advertising issue, this NGO network coordinated with international experts (Nordic and Baltic alcohol policy advocates) and advised the government against proposed changes. Such NGO input provided political cover to resist industry-led amendments. Strong response and advocacy campaign by NTAKK during an attempt in 2022 to significantly weaken The Law, has helped to protect all of the Best buys within the law.

Supporting measures and public awareness

Lithuania's authorities have supplemented the strict legal measures with **public communication and education efforts** to shift cultural attitudes on alcohol. The state institutions also cooperated with NGOs and universities to actively communicate the evidence of the best alcohol control policy practice in Lithuania and results of policy change.

In terms of **training and guidance**, the enforcement agency NTAKD and related bodies have conducted outreach to businesses when the 2018 ban was new. Alcohol producers, importers, and media companies have received guidelines on what is (and is not) allowed under the law. Training sessions or informational bulletins were presumably provided to ensure that all stakeholders (advertising agencies, event organizers, digital marketers, etc.) understood the new restrictions. This education-first approach eased implementation by securing voluntary compliance.

Another supportive measure has been **monitoring and research**. The five-year project "Evaluation of the impact of alcohol control policies on morbidity and mortality in Lithuania and other Baltic states" funded by National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (USA), has documented the results of policies (declines in alcohol consumption per capita, fewer alcohol-related deaths and injuries), has strengthening the justification to continue with stringent policies. The positive outcomes provide successful communication strategy, builds legitimacy and public confidence in the regulation.

Strengths and weaknesses

From the public health perspectives, the internal strengths of the Lithuanian alcohol advertising control system (AACS) can be summarised as follows.

- Alcohol advertising ban is part of a comprehensive and evidence based regulatory framework;
- the ban itself is exceptionally comprehensive and stringent. The near-total ban leaves little room for exploitative advertising, ensuring a high level of protection for vulnerable groups (youth, heavy drinkers) from marketing influences.
- The law is clear and cohesive – by prohibiting all ads, it avoids ambiguity and loopholes that partial restrictions often have. This also helps to reduce enforcement costs.
- Enforcement is backed by a dedicated agency (NTAKD) with legal tools to act quickly, even in the online sphere.
- Another strength is the coalition behind these policies: health advocates, NGOs, and parts of the government.
- Public support is relatively high.
- There is accumulating scientific evidence that the comprehensive alcohol policy has been successful in reducing mortality, delaying use in young age, etc.

The **weaknesses** of the Lithuanian AACS are:

- the main challenge is that zero alcohol beverages are not classified as alcohol, and that makes them exempt from all advertising and marketing restrictions.
- the Law includes specific alcohol control principles, which espouse "support to production and sales of non-alcoholic beverages", and it is currently attributed to 0,0 drinks (rather than juice). Industry is exploiting this loophole in full – TV, billboards, cinema, etc.
- there is no requirement that the alcohol brand should be visually distinguishable from non-alcoholic beverage.

- lack of interest and resources to monitor user generated content in digital space. No dedicated monitoring program in digital space.
- the absolute nature of the ban also means any minor violation and repercussions for the violations, receives disproportionate public attention becomes a cultural ridicule issue.

Opportunities and threats

These opportunities and threats on the national AACS may be related to environmental, social or socio-cultural factors. Opportunities are:

- On the positive side, Lithuania's strict regime positions it as a leader and role model in alcohol control policy internationally. This opens opportunities to share best practices and collaborate with other countries on transnational alcohol marketing issues, contribute to increasing scientific evidence regarding alcohol control policies that are effective.
- Strong legal framework creates space for positive cultural change to happen, especially among the youth.
- The comprehensive policies have reduced consumption in the population and helped strengthen confidence in stricter alcohol control policy.
- Promotion non-alcoholic beverages and alternatives, remains both the weakness and opportunity in the Law, since it explicitly encourages production of non-alcoholic drinks. This could be used for promoting a healthier lifestyle.
- Quality research that has been produced in the past 5 years contributes to evidence for better implementation of WHOs Best Buys, including advertising ban.

Threats that can be identified, corresponding to external limitations to the AACS, are:

- The most prominent threat is the comprehensive ban does not include prohibition to advertise zero-alcohol beverages of the same brands as alcohol. This advertising is overflowing in all media and reducing effectiveness of advertising ban.
- There are regular attempts to roll back or weaken the restrictions on national level.
- EU currently has a very pro-industry position and EU alcohol advertising restrictions remain very weak and not implemented.
- Changes in government or sustained lobbying are a significant threat to weakening of control policy I general and advertising, marketing policy specifically.
- Positive results and reduced alcohol harm could encourage false sense that the problem is solved, therefore increasing pressure to relax restrictions, like attempts in Nordic countries to reduce influence of monopolies.

In conclusion, Lithuania's legal framework for alcohol advertising as of 2024 is characterized by its stringency and public health focus. The current law is robust and largely effective, enjoying support from health experts and much of the public. It achieves a high level of protection by virtually eliminating alcohol marketing in the public sphere. Ongoing vigilance is required to enforce the ban in the face of evolving digital media and internal political pressures. The Lithuanian case exemplifies how evidence-based policy, when well-implemented and supported by society, can drive positive health outcomes – but it also highlights the need to guard against erosion of those gains by commercial interests.

YOUTH'S PERCEPTIONS ON ADAM AND ITS ROLE IN ALCOHOL DRINKING

Digital culture and attitudes towards digital advertising

Digital media use, advertising awareness, and perceived digital literacy

Young people referred to themselves as highly accustomed to digital environment, particularly social media platforms. Commercial content is perceived as an integral part of everyday online experience. Interviewees expressed strong awareness of how digital advertising operates, frequently referring to algorithms, personalized feeds, and the presence of advertisement or sponsor content. Few referred to commercial content as intrusive or exceptional, most respondents generally described it as expected and routine.

Most interviewees emphasized their ability to recognize advertising content and to manage their exposure to it: scrolling past advertisements, muting content. Overall, there was a strong sense of personal choice and control over what respondents felt they were exposed to and most denied they are affected by content.

> *"Yes, it's a bit of a vague memory. But I don't know, exactly. I must have seen it was vodka and remembered it, but I couldn't tell you why. It didn't stand out to me that it was an advert for vodka."* (LT-06-F-18-non drinker)
>
> *"You can always just skip it or click that you're not interested." (LT_17_F_17)*
>
> *"Well, at least from my perspective I can say that it's not at all like that for me, that you would see an advertisement and think, oh, today I'd really like some wine. Well, it's definitely not like that."* (LT_14_F_19*)*
>
> *"I look at that advertisement and move on, but the product doesn't interest me at all."* (LT_11_M_18)

Digital advertising was not perceived as something that demands sustained attention, more as background content within a fast-moving digital environment, where users feel confident, they can filter what is provided to them.

Attitudes towards digital advertising in general

Attitudes towards digital advertising were predominantly neutral to moderately negative, characterized more by indifference than by strong opposition. Some respondents described occasional irritation, especially when advertisements were repetitive, did not related to their interests or searches, but the negative reactions were usually short-lived.

> *"Sometimes it's annoying, but then you scroll, and that's it."* (LT_08_F_19)

Some expressed a more resigned attitude, acknowledging that advertising is unavoidable in digital spaces and therefore not worth emotional investment.

> *"Advertising is everywhere anyway, so there's no point getting angry about it."* (LT_10_F_19)
>
> *"However, like you can't really, I think, ban it [non-alcoholic beverages]."* (LT_15_M_17)

Importantly, interviewees rarely framed digital advertising as deceptive or manipulative. Instead, they emphasized personal responsibility and awareness of commercial content, also claiming that alcohol content has no effect on their behaviour.

Attitudes towards ISN and platform-based content

In discussing influencer-supported networks (ISN) and platform-based content, interviewees mostly expressed ambiguity and unavoidability, rather than rejection. Influencer content was recognized as a common feature of digital space, but not clearly identified as advertising. The blurring of commercial and lifestyle content only sometimes provoked concern; mostly it was accepted as part of contemporary online communication.

Several respondents suggested that they are able to distinguish between genuine content and promotion, even when boundaries were blurred. Others acknowledged that while such distinctions are not always clear, this does not automatically imply influence. As one interviewee remarked:

> *"You kind of know when someone is promoting something, even if they don't say it directly."* (LT_03_M_18)
>
> *"Well, sometimes it happens that some influencer has a glass of champagne. But I've never seen them actually drinking fully or advertising alcohol. On TikTok there are lives where men drink, but I don't like such videos, so I block them and don't watch them anymore."* (LT_02_F_18)
>
> *"Well, so I have seen how, with their own, well… they have their own brand and there their alcohol of some kind, and then they launch some cocktails there and recommend which cocktails you can make with various alcohols. Or, those parties as well. Most often, when they advertise and I see it, it happens that they are celebrating something, some kind of a party."* (LT_04_F_18)

Overall, respondents expressed frequent use, and digital competency and claims of control and autonomy in relation to alcohol advertising and marketing.

Advertising and marketing: what comes most to mind?

The most remembered alcohol advertising

When asked about their last seen alcohol advertisement, most interviewees initially struggled to recall alcohol advertising at all, stating that they don't see much or any advertising at all on social media or television.

> *"I don't really remember anything specific."* (LT_04_F_18)
>
> *"Alcohol advertising… Now everywhere they advertise non-alcoholic alcohol. So I saw it on television — they were advertising beer, but without alcohol. In general I don't remember exactly, but I have seen it on television."* (LT_02_F_18)
>
> *"No. I think programs show mostly what you watch often. Since I don't watch content about alcohol, it doesn't throw me any advertisements or related content either."* (LT_02_F_18)
>
> *"I don't know, I've never seen them advertising some kind of beer or some stronger drinks. So most often it's just that TikTok sometimes throws them up there, but really not often."* (LT_03_M_18)

Interviewees remembered alcohol advertising mostly in digital and some in physical environment. Social media platforms, video content most common reference points, when discussing recent or repeated exposure.

Physical advertising in public spaces was remembered primarily when it was encountered repeatedly in familiar locations and sales points. For example, because one is regularly walking the same route or visiting same shop or bar:

> *"Just because I walk past that place often — I've seen it more than once."* (LT_09_M_16)

Some advertisements were remembered because of relation to previous search patterns reflected in the personal feed:

> *"I was looking at bars, and then I started getting lots of ads for bars — and I assumed there would be alcohol."* (LT_14_F_19)

When interviewees recalled specific alcohol advertising, references were most often made to widely recognized brands and to commonly consumed beverage categories. Most of them eventually acknowledged as non-alcoholic. Beer brands were mentioned most frequently, specifically Heineken.

> *"I guess maybe a couple of weeks ago there was a Vilkmergė beer advertisement on television — that was probably the last time I saw one."* (LT_01_M_17)
>
> *"The last… I think the advertisements are banned, but I don't know, I remember… I think there was something there with beer, Heineken, something like that… there in the summer, I think it was."* (LT_03_M_18)
>
> *"Not fully, no, but they often advertise, for example, Radler."* (LT_02_F_18)

Also, a few spirits were named, specifically: "Bacardi", "Aviation Gin", "Jägermeister "

> *"I don't know if it would count as an advertisement, but today I saw that 'Bacardi' has a new flavour… they now have some alcohol, I just don't remember which one, but a new flavour appeared."* (LT_04_F_18)
>
> *"Yeah, there was, what is it called, Jägermeister?"* (LT_17_F_19)
>
> *"I don't know, now I have seen somewhere on Instagram that Ryan Reynolds is advertising, I think, maybe even his own Aviator Gin, some gin or something, that's all I remember, but now I only remember it because of the actor."* (LT_11_M_18)

In several cases, interviewees remembered advertisements precisely because they highlighted combinations of alcohol with non-alcoholic beverages, which were perceived as unexpected or problematic.

> *"It was advertised as something you can drink with Pepsi — a drink that many kids drink — and that's why I remembered it."* (LT_10_F_19)

Other respondents referred to cocktail recipes or mixing suggestions presented in advertising or promotional content, which made the advertisement stand out due to its practical or instructional framing:

> *"I really remembered the cocktail recipe — mixing alcohol with an energy drink."* (LT_13_F_19)

Main features and motives for remembering

Across interviews, interviewees consistently mentioned several reasons for remembering such as discounts, convenient point of sale and new flavours.

> *"Okay, so I was walking, near my home there is a wine shop, and in 'Vynoteka' I saw how wine was being sold for 5 euros and 76 cents. There was a discount applied to it, I won't say what kind of wine it was because I wasn't interested, I just came up and looked."* (LT_09_M_16)

> *"Well, yeah, in the city, for example this one — 'Lidl' has that thing where it's like world flavours or something like that, there by the self-checkout registers."* (LT_19_M_19)
> *"There was, a friend has sent [me] that in some club there the little cocktails are 3 euros. So there she sends it, like, a discount — just like I mentioned, that I said there usually aren't discounts, but there are, for example, discounts on alcoholic cocktails in bars."* (LT_14_F_19)

Distinctive brand elements, such as packaging or logos, also played a role.

> *"That shiny green bottle immediately catches your attention."* (LT_12_M_16)
>
> *"They really played with colours — very bright colours — and that's probably why it stuck in my memory."* (LT_08_F_19)

Celebrity presence and cultural references were another recurring motive for remembering. In these cases, the public figure associated with the advertisement was often more memorable than the alcohol product itself:

> *"I don't know, now I have seen somewhere on Instagram that Ryan Reynolds is advertising, I think, maybe even his own Aviator Gin, some gin or something, that's all I remember, but now I only remember it because of the actor."* (LT_11_M_18)
>
> *"Maybe once a day I can see a Heineken advertisement with Max Verstappen, that the best driver is the one who doesn't drink, except if it's non-alcoholic, something like that. So this is an advertisement that I remember now, but it is non-alcoholic."* (LT_15_M_17)

In addition to positive or neutral features, some advertisements were remembered because they generated surprise or discomfort. Moral unease, particularly in relation to youth exposure or health risks, made certain advertisements stand out from routine advertising content. One interviewee reflected:

> *"I remember thinking that this was kind of immoral — like advertising gambling."* (LT_19_M_19)

ADAM exposure: perceived effects and attitudes

Perceived level of alcohol marketing exposure via Digital or other channels

When reflecting on their exposure to alcohol advertising and marketing (ADAM), interviewees generally expressed that they had not seen much advertising, but content featuring alcohol or drinking was very common. Usually in the form of shot video content on TikTok and Instagram mainly of intoxicated individuals in compromising situations or general party and nightlife-oriented videos. Both harmful drinking patterns, but also fun, partying and celebrations.

> *"You see it sometimes, but it just mixes in with everything else."* (LT_06_F_18)
>
> *"I think quite often, because there are many… many people who express their adventures and just various 'experiences' through videos, where most often they are drunk and how happy it was for them and how things went well."* (LT_05_M_19)
>
> *"But in general that alcohol, for example in a personal environment, if we're talking about Instagram, for example Close Friends, it is always, I don't know, idealized, romanticized, whatever you call it, that it's all okay with it and that drinking is okay. So this is more from the closer circle, at most."* (LT_08_F_19)
>
> *"Yeah. Yeah. All the time, all the time, especially there are a lot of those memes, so, I mean, the majority of the feed is something like that."* (LT_08_F_19)

> *"Ah, yes… Then yes, really a lot… yeah, then if I just see people like that, then, well, generally in that positive way, as we say, the photos can look elegant and just in general, alcohol affects a person, so some cheerful things can also be filmed. So in that sense…"* (LT_16_F_16)

Attitudes towards alcohol advertising exposure

Overall exposure was perceived as low and attitudes towards exposure to alcohol advertising were predominantly characterized by indifference or emotional distance. Many interviewees stated that alcohol advertising does not bother them, largely because it is perceived as an unavoidable part of contemporary media environments.

> *"It doesn't really bother me, because I don't see how it could be avoided anyway."* (LT_08_F_19)

Some interviewees described mild irritation, particularly when advertisements were repetitive or poorly targeted. However, such reactions were usually short-lived and easily managed through scrolling or disengagement:

> *"Sometimes it's annoying, but then you just scroll past it."* (LT_17_F_17)

Alongside indifference, a smaller number of respondents expressed ambivalent or uneasy attitudes, especially when considering the broader social consequences of alcohol advertising. These concerns were often framed in abstract terms and linked to vulnerable groups rather than to personal impact.

> *"It's unpleasant when you think about people who already have problems with alcohol."* (LT_19_M_19)
>
> *"Well, it's not very good that it conditions young people from an early age. Not good."* (LT_06_F_18)

Perceived impact of advertising and the channels with the greatest impact

When asked about the impact of alcohol advertising on behaviour, interviewees overwhelmingly downplayed its influence on their own drinking. The most common response was a clear denial that advertising triggers alcohol consumption or shapes personal decisions.

> *"Even though I do receive them and see them, they never create that kind of need for me, like 'oh, now I saw it and I'll go buy it now.' So, I don't know, for me they don't really bother me; I don't know about other people, but for me it doesn't bother me."* (LT_01_M_17)
>
> *"I look at that advertisement and move on, but the product doesn't interest me at all."* (LT_11_M_18)
>
> *"I would maybe say no, because I think that young people are encouraged more to consume alcohol by friends themselves and by their environment than by advertisements."* (LT_13_F_19)

The perception of autonomy was repeated across interviews, even among those who could recall specific advertisements or found them visually appealing.

However, while denying personal impact, interviewees frequently suggested that advertising may influence **others**, particularly younger people or those with less experience. Advertising was described as potentially engaging when it presented alcohol as fun, social, or desirable, especially through appealing visuals or narratives of belonging.

> *"For younger people who haven't tried it yet, it might work like advertising — showing that drinking is fun."* (LT_10_F_19)

> *"But I think that for other people they can affect them worse. All kinds of other people can see them, and they can be affected more than me. »*
>
> *"So they are simply trying to protect young people who are still too naïve to be responsible for themselves, and who can be more easily influenced by those advertisements."* (LT_15_M_17)
> *If they're non-alcoholic, at some point they will move on to alcoholic ones. Maybe there is also some kind of bad in that."* (LT_15_M_17)

Experiences and attitudes towards different types of advertising

Interviewees were unable to distinguish well between different forms of advertising and recognizing it in general even if they are able to recollect specific videos where influencers are consuming alcohol or even associate themselves with a specific brand.

> *"Sometimes an influencer has a drink in their hand, but it doesn't feel like an ad."* (LT_02_F_18)

At the same time, some respondents demonstrated awareness of commercial collaborations, especially when influencers have large audiences.

> *"Yes, all sorts of those podcasts, where, well, they include [alcohol] in podcasts, for example, they put some kind of alcoholic drink in front of the camera. I think this is also one of those ways, and I think it's simply like a form of advertising. Not very appealing specifically to young people… I can't think of what could attract young people more."* (LT_19_M_19)
>
> *"Brands contact people with big followings, and then they promote it."* (LT_03_M_18)
>
> *"Yeah, in those podcasts, like the ones Dominykas Klajumas has, when I watch a podcast, there are also those cans from 'Liūtukas.' So those are the kinds I remember, but also everything that I start seeing is non-alcoholic. But I think that they still profit from that, because people always buy non-alcoholic ones along with that. If they're non-alcoholic, at some point they will move on to alcoholic ones. Maybe there is also some kind of bad in that. However, you kind of can't really look at it that way, like you can't really, I think, ban it."* (LT_15_M_17)

User-generated alcohol content, such as posts shared by friends or peers, was almost never perceived as advertising. Instead, it was framed as a reflection of everyday social life. Alcohol appeared in photos and videos from parties, celebrations, or informal gatherings, often accompanied by humour or aesthetic presentation:

> *"You see people drinking, having fun — it just looks like normal life."* (LT_16_F_16)
>
> *"I think quite often, because there are many… many people who express their adventures and just various 'experiences' through videos, where most often they are drunk and how happy it was for them and how things went well."* (LT_05_M_19)
>
> *"But in general that alcohol, for example in a personal environment, if we're talking about Instagram, for example Close Friends, it is always, I don't know, idealized, romanticized, whatever you call it, that it's all okay with it and that drinking is okay."* (LT_08_F_19)

Confusion regarding non-alcoholic beverages being advertised

Main feature of exposure to advertising is confusion of recognising weather a beverage is alcoholic or not. Repeated theme: "I've seen alcohol advertisement, and oh … it was non-alcoholic…''

> *"Alcohol advertising… Now everywhere they advertise non-alcoholic alcohol. So I saw it on television — they were advertising beer, but without degrees. In general I don't remember exactly, but I have seen it on television."* (LT_02_F_18)

> *"So it was probably on YouTube. 'Drink non-alcoholic beer.' And in general, I've seen the most about non-alcoholic beer."* (LT_05_M_19)
>
> *"So the last one was very recently. Maybe once a day I can see a Heineken advertisement with Max Verstappen, that the best driver is the one who doesn't drink, except if it's non-alcoholic, something like that. So this is the advertisement that I remember now, but it is non-alcoholic."* (LT_15_M_17)
>
> *"Not fully, no, but they often advertise, for example, Radler. I don't know, they change those advertisements all the time, so I don't remember exactly, but usually they show a man drinking, and at the end they show that it's without degrees."* (LT_02_F_18)

Knowledge and attitudes towards alcohol regulation

Knowledge of alcohol control policies and marketing regulation

When asked about regulations governing alcohol advertising and alcohol control policies (ACP), most interviewees demonstrated limited knowledge of existing rules. Many respondents expressed doubt whether their knowledge about advertising being banned is correct and that they were unfamiliar with specific regulations.

> *"I don't really know what the rules are."* (LT_04_F_18)
>
> *"Well, I've heard somewhere that you sort of aren't allowed to advertise, right? But I don't actually know if that's true. But I've heard this fact somewhere."* (LT_06_F_18)
>
> *"I know that you're not allowed to advertise alcohol itself, that's why there are only advertisements for non-alcoholic versions. Yeah, maybe from advertisements it's also that you might not be allowed to make discounts on alcohol, but I'm not sure about that. So yeah, but in general I'm not very familiar with it."* (LT_01_M_17)
>
> *"I've only heard it, I don't know how much truth there is to it, but in Lithuania it is prohibited to advertise alcohol. It seems to me… it can't be that in advertisements, that it is… that it is not allowed specifically for alcohol."* (LT_05_M_19)

Acceptability of alcohol marketing regulation and alcohol control policies

Despite this limited awareness, interviewees rarely questioned the legitimacy of regulation itself. The legislative regulation was perceived as distant from everyday experience, resulting in low awareness and knowledge.

Although interviewees were often unfamiliar with the specifics of alcohol regulation, there was broad normative support for regulating alcohol advertising and marketing. Many respondents expressed agreement with the idea that the state should intervene to limit the promotion of alcohol, particularly to protect young people and reduce harm.

> *"I think it makes sense, because alcohol is harmful, and advertising just encourages it."* (LT_04_F_18)
>
> *"I think yes, I agree, because the state anyway sees the data — alcohol purchases, imports, and so on. So I also think that they should have the right to change these rules and laws according to their, well, how to say it, provisions."* (LT_01_M_17)
>
> *"What do I think about it? I think it's not very bad; it's just a kind of preventive measure."* (LT_03_M_18)

> *"I think yes, because I think that in Lithuania there is a fairly big problem — alcoholism — and I think that reducing it in various ways would be good. So, not advertising alcohol, or at least regulating it more strictly."* (LT_04_F_18)

Support for regulation was often justified by reference to alcohol's health risks, its addictive potential, and its widespread social presence. Even among those who expressed tolerant or indifferent attitudes toward alcohol advertising, regulation was generally seen as acceptable and justified.

Perceived effectiveness of regulations

Alongside this general support, interviewees frequently expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of existing regulations, particularly in digital environments. Social media platforms were described as difficult to regulate due to algorithmic targeting and the prevalence of user-generated material.

> *"The state can try to limit it, but on social media there are too many loopholes."* (LT_05_M_19)

Others questioned whether advertising restrictions alone can significantly change drinking behaviour, especially given the strong influence of peers and cultural norms:

> *"Even if you ban advertising, people will still drink because of friends."* (LT_09_M_16)

Suggestions to improve alcohol prevention

When invited to suggest ways to improve alcohol prevention, interviewees proposed a range of measures that went beyond advertising restrictions alone. Many emphasized the importance of education and awareness, specifically targeted at younger people.

Some respondents suggested stricter age targeting and clearer separation between alcohol-related content and youth-oriented platforms:

> *"Alcohol advertising shouldn't be shown to younger people at all."* (LT_05_M_19)

Others highlighted the need for better information about health risks, arguing that prevention should focus on long-term consequences rather than prohibition:

> *"People should understand what alcohol actually does to your body."* (LT_13_F_19)

Attitudes towards drinking and main drivers of drinking

Personal attitudes to alcohol and perceived risks

Interviewees expressed a wide range of personal attitudes toward alcohol, shaped by experience, experimentation, and individual values. For many, alcohol consumption was described as normal and situational, associated with social occasions rather than everyday use.

> *"I know it's bad for your health, but that doesn't mean people won't drink."* (LT_05_M_19)

Although most understood that drinking alcohol is harmful, few were fully aware of the wide range of health problems that can be caused by excessive drinking. Only a handful were able to name more than one organ affected by alcohol consumption.

> *"Our liver, our body, suffers a lot from this, because it is very difficult to process alcohol in our body. And how much it affects that so-called paxmas in our body also harms the body a lot and greatly reduces life, those minutes. So, yeah."* (LT_09_M_16)

> *"The very first thing that comes to my mind is that people, most often when they drink, behave aggressively, they can cause various… well, feelings of insecurity for the people around them, injuries, and similar things. And in general, of course, it harms health — damages the liver, the stomach, and so on, and so on. Alcohol overdose is also common in Lithuania; it is also frequent in Lithuania. So, all kinds of homeless people get drunk, fall down, die. So, it causes many different bad things."* (LT_06_F_18)
>
> *"Well, so physical problems — stomach, liver, gallbladder diseases. Then psychological problems, addictions… There, psychoses, schizophrenias… Basically yeah, like that."* (LT_18_M_19)

The rest told us that alcohol was harmful, but could not elaborate on specific types of harms. Some were unsure whether the liver was the "the one" that was affected and some thought it was the only one affected.

> *"So as far as I know, it only harms the liver. So, it has that kind of risk."* (LT_13_F_19)
>
> *"So just… now I'm thinking… the liver, right? I really, really don't like biology."* (LT_07_F_19)

Those who were unable to mention specific physical health issues could identify risks related to social life, accidents and conflicts that are more commonly known.

> *"What risks? The first one is health… It affects health negatively. Anyway, a person becomes not… The second thing is that a person becomes not… cannot manage as well… he becomes intoxicated and cannot fully control his body, so other people can be harmed, and he himself can suffer a lot… If he starts using [alcohol] during work, then he can very seriously injure other clients, or plus you lose your sense of responsibility, which is really a negative thing."* (LT_05_M_19)
>
> *"And because of that, more there is, they talk about the fact that it harms others more, so for example those same accidents — the number of accidents has increased a lot because of alcohol consumption. Then, simply, that a drinking person there encourages another person to drink, and it just goes like that as a chain."* (LT_17_F17)

Both drinkers and non-drinkers referred to personal limits and self-regulation, reinforcing the perception that drinking decisions are **conscious and individual**, even when socially influenced.

Role of peers and social environment

Peers emerged consistently as the most influential factor shaping drinking behavior. Alcohol consumption was framed as a social activity, closely linked to group norms, shared experiences, and a sense of belonging.

> *"If my friends drink, I'll drink too."* (LT_09_M_16)
>
> *"I'm not someone who likes to drink. Usually, well, I like it when it tastes good. If it doesn't taste good to me, then I don't want to drink. But it depends… So a couple of times a month, maybe I have one or two drinks — when the company is fun, when the mood is good, then yes."* (LT_06_F_18)
>
> *"Well, at first for me it was that, since I socialized here, it depends very, very much on the company; since I lived in that small town — well, and I still live there now — but I was with those people, it seemed to me that alcohol was like wow, that now I'm already an adult, now I can do everything, everything is fine, and so it really happened that you didn't calculate that alcohol, it really happened that sometimes it was too much."* (LT_14_F_19)

Peer influence was not always described as direct pressure. Instead, it often operated through subtle expectations and shared practices. Some interviewees reflected critically on this dynamic, noting that changing social circles led to changes in drinking behaviour:

> *"When I stopped spending time with certain people, I drank less."* (LT_17_F_17)

For non-drinkers, peer influence could also take the form of negotiation or resistance, highlighting the diversity of experiences within youth social groups.

Role of family and cultural traditions

Family environment played an important role in shaping attitudes toward alcohol. Interviewees frequently referred to parental behavior as a reference point for familiarising with drinking norms:

> *"My parents drink, so it was always normal at home."* (LT_09_M_16)

In many cases when the parents are more lenient towards drinking, they are often responsible for giving their children alcohol.

> *"So, but in general, for example, when it comes to other friends, let's say, their mothers will sooner buy it themselves."* (LT_17_F_17)
>
> *"In general, well, most often for me, it's generally strange that it's like that — at least among my peers, in the environment around me, there are often those who just seem to drink as if they were adults. And their parents simply — for some of them, more precisely — just give them alcohol to drink, like vodka and all of that."* (LT_20_M_17)
>
> *"I don't know, really, if it's like some Friday or something more festive is happening, then parents there always give a glass of wine or champagne or something like that, somehow…"* (LT_18_M_19)
>
> *"Well, only, I don't know, from time to time they give me a taste of champagne there, but also, I mean, very little, and they just say that it is bad and that you don't need to do it."* (LT_16_F_16)

The participants that had consumed small amounts of alcohol with their parents were all the result of their families suggesting or offering a taste or mentioning that they have reached an age where it is allowed.

> *"There have been, there have been [times]. But that too, that was when I was seventeen, at the end of sixteen years old. Because earlier they looked at that more, that it really wasn't allowed, that [I was] too young. And now I've grown up, so…"* (LT_15_M_17)
>
> *"No, no, it was just a couple of times. That was already when I turned 18, then my uncle said: 'Well, here you go, take a taste, it's kind of allowed now…' Although partly it's not allowed, but well, still many people consider that from 18 a person can do [things]…"* (LT_13_F_19)
>
> *"It really happens. It really happens that if, for example, we drop by some, I don't know, restaurant there and there's something new, interesting, then they always say, 'well, you can take a little sip too, of course if you want. We're not forcing you, but if you want, you can.'"* (LT_07_F_19)

Accessibility of alcohol

Interviewees also reflected on the accessibility of alcohol, noting that availability plays a role in shaping consumption. Access was often mediated through peers, particularly for younger respondents:

> *"Friends help each other get alcohol."* (LT_10_F_19)

Family members were occasionally mentioned as another access point, either directly or indirectly. Points of sale were also discussed, with some interviewees suggesting that alcohol is relatively easy to obtain despite age restrictions.

> *"So, but in general, for example, when it comes to other friends, let's say, their mothers will sooner buy it themselves."* (LT_17_F_17)

EXPOSURE TO ADAM

Digital and TV exposure to positive portrayal of alcohol

Results show very high overall exposure in the country sample to positive portrayals of alcohol in the past 30 days via any media (78%); exposure was higher for online channels (66%) than for TV/cinema (48%), with percentages over the mean among male, non-binary genders, non-drinkers, those with higher socioeconomic status, and intensive users of ISN. However, there were no overall significant differences of exposure based on gender, socioeconomic or drinking status.

The overall exposure to positive portrayals and alcohol consumption depicted as fun is very high, with no exposure difference between adults and underaged for any media, but exposure for under 18 (61%) online was lower than for adults (67%). There was only minimal variation between exposure rates for male and female, and persons of superior and lower socioeconomic status.

Table 3. Effective exposure to positive portrayal in Lithuania (N=419)

Have seen a **positive portrayal of alcohol**, in the last 30 days		**On line**			**On TV or at cinema**			**On any media**		
		n	*%total*	*%cat.*	n	*%total*	*%cat.*	*n*	*%total*	*%cat.*
In the whole country sample		**275**	***66%***	***66%***	***203***	***48%***	***48%***	***328***	***78%***	***78%***
Age	Under 18	77	*18%*	*61%*	62	*15%*	*50%*	98	*23%*	*78%*
	More than 18	198	*47%*	*67%*	141	*34%*	*48%*	230	*55%*	*78%*
Gender	Male	135	*32%*	*65%*	99	*24%*	*48%*	166	*40%*	*80%*
	Female	133	*32%*	*65%*	100	*24%*	*48%*	156	*37%*	*76%*
	Non-binary	3	*1%*	*100%*	2	*0%*	*58%*	3	*1%*	*100%*
	Other	3	*1%*	*100%*	3	*1%*	*100%*	3	*1%*	*100%*
Drinking status	Drinkers	189	*45%*	*68%*	129	*31%*	*47%*	216	*52%*	*78%*
	Non drinkers	86	*21%*	*61%*	74	*18%*	*52%*	112	*27%*	*79%*
Economic category	Superior	102	*24%*	66%	76	*18%*	49%	123	*29%*	79%
	Lower to intermediate	173	*41%*	66%	127	*30%*	48%	205	*49%*	78%
Knowledge of the ban to advertise alcohol to minors	Yes	126	*30%*	*68%*	93	*22%*	*50%*	147	*35%*	*80%*
	No	149	*36%*	*63%*	111	*26%*	*47%*	181	*43%*	*77%*
Acceptance of ban on advertising to minors	Fully or somewhat agree	192	*46%*	*65%*	142	*34%*	*48%*	227	*54%*	*77%*
	Fully or somewhat disagree or don't know	82	*20%*	*66%*	61	*15%*	*49%*	101	*24%*	*81%*
Internet or social network (ISN) use	Heavy to intensive use	89	*21%*	*78%*	61	*14%*	*53%*	98	*23%*	*86%*
	Low to moderate use	186	*44%*	*61%*	143	*34%*	*47%*	230	*55%*	*76%*

** Student test with a significance level of 95%.*

Respondents who knew about advertising ban were also more aware of perceived exposure vs those who were unsure (80% vs 77% for all media, 68% vs 63% for online). There was no difference in exposure in relation to acceptability of such ban, except for all media exposure (77% vs 81%), with those disagreeing with the ban exposed more.

Respondents with heavy to intensive use of social networks report higher but statistically nonsignificant exposure than those with low to moderate use media (86% vs 76%, in all media, 53% vs 47% for TV/cinema, and 78% vs 61% online).

Drinker status was associated with more frequent perception of exposure to positive portrayals of alcohol online, but not when considering all media exposure or TV/cinema exposure: with non-significant differences across all channels: in all media (78% vs 79%, online 68% vs 61%, and TV/cinema (47% vs 52%)

Vectors of online of exposure to positive portrayal

The table lists digital types of social media posts which expose individuals to alcohol-related content. The most frequent exposure is to posts from ordinary persons (27%), followed by post generated by alcohol brands (23%) and celebrity and influencer posts (16% and 17%). Finally, posts from an organization / event organizer is fairly less frequent (5%).

Adult respondents appear more exposed than minors across all sources, however the difference is non-significant. Underaged persons are also significantly exposed to promotional and positive alcohol-related content by alcohol industry – approximately 1 in 5 minors is exposed to alcohol brand posts.

Respondents with higher ISN use, are overall more exposed than low to moderate users to digital alcohol-related content: for example, 32% of ISN heavy users report exposure created by a friend or an ordinary person, while less intensive use results in 25% exposure, 28 % of ISN heavy users report exposure created by alcohol brands, while lower intensity results in 21% exposure.

Table 4. Digital contents conveying alcohol positive portray in Lithuania (N=419)

Digital channels of positive portrayal of alcohol	**In the whole country sample**		Under 18		More than 18		Heavy to intensive ISN user		Moderate to low ISN user	
	n	%total	n	%cat.	n	%cat.	n	%cat.	n	%cat.
In an influencer's post	**72**	17%	18	14%	54	18%	24	21%	48	16%
In a celebrity's post	**69**	16%	23	18%	46	16%	19	17%	50	16%
In a post created by a friend or an ordinary person	**111**	27%	29	24%	82	28%	36	32%	75	25%
In a post created by an association, an event organizer	**23**	5%	2	2%	21	7%	7	6%	16	5%
In a post created by an alcohol brand	**97**	23%	26	21%	70	24%	32	28%	65	21%
In other kinds of posts	**58**	14%	15	12%	44	15%	19	17%	39	13%
I'm not sure/ I don't remember	**15**	3%	3	2%	12	4%	5	4%	10	3%

Vectors of TV exposure to positive portrayal

Table 5 presents the television channels through which respondents report exposure to positive portrayals of alcohol. The most frequently cited sources are movies or series episodes (21%) and advertising spots or commercials (16%). Important note, that it is highly unlikely that reports regarding advertising are accurate and most likely represent advertisements for zero alcohol brand beverages. Other types of exposure, such as music video clips (10%) and other television programmes (7%), are reported less frequently, while documentaries and prevention campaigns are only marginally mentioned.

Exposure to alcohol advertising was higher among minors than adults (21% vs 14%), but the difference did not reach statistical significance (χ^2 (1) = 2.72, p=0.10). Similarly, minors more frequently reported positive alcohol portrayal in movies or series than adults (27% vs 19%), showing a borderline association (χ^2 (1) = 3.06, p=0.08).

Table 4. TV contents *conveying* alcohol positive portrayal in Lithuania (n=419)

TV channels of positive portrayal of alcohol	In the whole country sample		Under 18		More than 18		Heavy to intensive ISN user		Moderate to low ISN user	
	n	%total	n	%cat.	n	%cat.	n	%cat.	n	%cat.
In advertising spots/commercials	69	16%	27	21%	42	14%	20	17%	49	16%
In a prevention campaign warning of the risks of alcohol use	19	5%	1	1%	18	6%	10	9%	10	3%
In a documentary report	14	3%	3	3%	11	4%	8	7%	6.1875	2%
In a movie or a series episode	88	21%	34	27%	55	19%	29	26%	59	19%
In another TV show	30	7%	5	4%	25	8%	14	12%	16	5%
In a music video clip	41	10%	11	9%	30	10%	16	14%	25	8%
In another kind of TV broadcast	25	6%	8	6%	17	6%	10	9%	15	5%
I'm not sure/ I don't remember	7	2%	3	2%	4	1%	1	1%	6	2%

As for digital practices, respondents with heavy to intensive internet and social network (ISN) use report higher levels of exposure across most television channels compared with moderate to low ISN users. For example, 26% of heavy ISN users report exposure to alcohol portrayals in movies or series episodes, compared with 19% among less intensive users. Similarly, exposure through music video clips reaches 14% among heavy users, versus 8% among moderate to low ISN users.

The results indicate large imbalance in messaging, as prevention campaign messages represents a very small share of exposure (5%), and a trend that minors see fewer warning and prevention messages than adults (1% vs 6%). However, the number of individuals noticing prevention messages is very small and could depend on individual experiences.

Digital and TV exposure to alcohol advertising

In table 6, results indicate that exposure to alcohol advertising in Lithuania remains widespread across both digital and traditional media. Overall, 83% of respondents report having seen alcohol advertising on either digital or audiovisual media in the past 30 days. Exposure is most frequently reported on social networks (70%) and on the Internet more broadly (65%), while national television appears as a less prominent channel, with half of respondents (50%) reporting exposure.

Minors and adults report very similar levels of overall exposure on either digital or audiovisual media (85% and 83%, respectively). While adults report slightly higher exposure through social networks (71% vs. 66%) and national television (51% vs. 47%), results do not indicate a protective effect for underaged respondents, since overall exposure on internet is higher for minors than adults (68% vs. 64%). Gender differences are minimal, with men and women reporting comparable levels of exposure across all media channels. Both groups report exposure rates of around two thirds on the Internet and social networks, and approximately half on national television.

In contrast, drinking status is more clearly associated with exposure. Respondents who consume alcohol report higher exposure across all media compared with non-drinkers, particularly on social networks (74% vs. 61%) and national television (54% vs. 43%). Nevertheless, exposure among non-drinkers remains substantial, with four out of five reporting having seen alcohol advertising on either digital or audiovisual media.

Respondents from higher and lower socio-economic backgrounds report broadly similar exposure levels across media. Likewise, awareness and acceptance of the ban on alcohol advertising to minors do not appear to substantially reduce exposure, as respondents who support or are aware of the ban report exposure rates comparable to those who do not.

Finally, intensity of internet and social network (ISN) use is associated with higher exposure. Somewhat inconsistently intensive ISN users report higher exposure also on national television (57% vs. 47%), while heavy users of ISN usually have lower consumption of national TV programs. However, exposure remains high even among low to moderate ISN users, underlining the pervasive nature of alcohol advertising across media environments.

Table 5. Effective exposure to audiovisual or digital alcohol advertising in Lithuania (n=419)

Have seen **alcohol advertising**, in the last 30 days		**On Internet**			**On social networks**			**On national TV**			**On either digital or audiovisual media**		
		n	%total	%cat.	n	%total	%cat.	n	%total	%cat.	n	%total	%cat.
In the whole country sample		**273**	***65%***	***65%***	**291**	***70%***	***70%***	**210**	***50%***	***50%***	**350**	***83%***	***83%***
Age	Under 18	85	*20%*	*68%*	82	*20%*	*66%*	59	*14%*	*47%*	106	*25%*	*85%*
	More than 18	188	*45%*	*64%*	209	*50%*	*71%*	151	*36%*	*51%*	243	*58%*	*83%*
Gender	Male	139	*33%*	*67%*	140	*33%*	*68%*	101	*24%*	*49%*	179	*43%*	*87%*
	Female	128	*30%*	*62%*	145	*35%*	*70%*	104	*25%*	*50%*	165	*39%*	*80%*
	Non-binary	3	*1%*	*100%*	3	*1%*	*100%*	3	*1%*	*100%*	3	*1%*	*100%*
	Other	3	*1%*	*100%*	3	*1%*	*100%*	1	*0%*	*49%*	3	*1%*	*100%*
Drinking status	Drinkers	190	*45%*	*69%*	205	*49%*	*74%*	149	*36%*	*54%*	237	*57%*	*85%*
	Non drinkers	83	*20%*	*58%*	86	*20%*	*61%*	61	*14%*	*43%*	113	*27%*	*80%*
Economic category	Superior	101	*24%*	65%	109	*26%*	70%	76	*18%*	49%	128	*31%*	82%
	Lower to intermediate	172	*41%*	65%	182	*44%*	69%	134	*32%*	51%	221	*53%*	84%
Knowledge of the ban to advertise alcohol to minors	Yes	128	*31%*	*70%*	127	*30%*	*69%*	88	*21%*	*48%*	154	*37%*	*84%*
	No	145	*35%*	*61%*	164	*39%*	*70%*	122	*29%*	*52%*	195	*47%*	*83%*
Acceptance of ban on advertising to minors	Fully or somewhat agree	199	*48%*	*68%*	213	*51%*	*72%*	144	*34%*	*49%*	249	*59%*	*84%*
	Fully / somewhat disagree or don't know	74	*18%*	*59%*	78	*19%*	*63%*	66	*16%*	*53%*	101	*24%*	*81%*
Internet or social network (ISN) use	Heavy to intensive use	81	*19%*	*70%*	77	*18%*	*67%*	65	*16%*	*57%*	97	*23%*	*85%*
	Low to moderate use	192	*46%*	*63%*	215	*51%*	*70%*	145	*34%*	*47%*	252	*60%*	*83%*

** Student test with a significance level of 95%.*

Vectors of online of exposure to alcohol advertising

Table 7 shows that social networks, music and video streaming, and search engines – are reported as major sources of exposure to ADAM.

Social media stands out as the primary channel of exposure online: the most frequent exposure occurred while browsing stories on social networks (51%), while difference between minors and adults (49% vs 52%), heavy and moderate users (54% vs 50%) is nonsignificant.

Alcohol advertising exposure through music or video content affects minors more frequently than adults (35% and 30% respectively), while exposure when posting on their own accounts (4% and 7% respectively) or making purchases remains low (7% and 13% respectively).

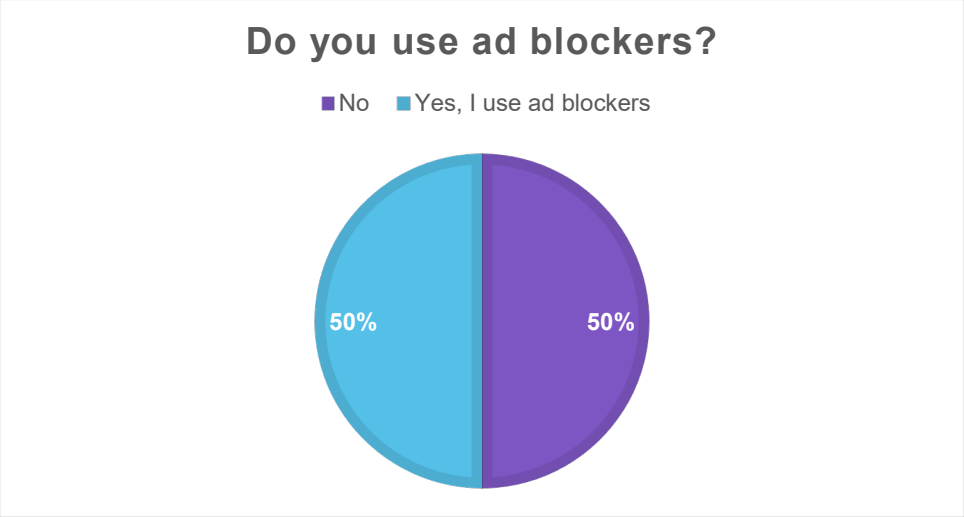
There was no difference between minors and adults when searching for information (23% for both), while there is higher exposure for intensive users of ISN 29% compared to low ISN user exposure (21%).

*Table 6. D*igital activities *conveying alcohol advertising in Lithuania (n=419)*

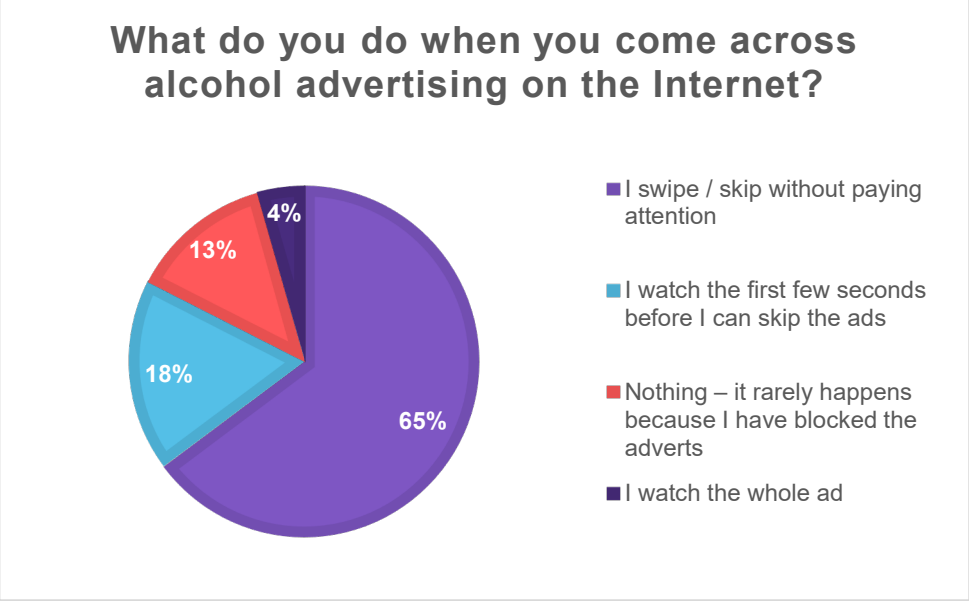
Internet **channels of alcohol advertising**	**In the whole country sample**		Under 18		More than 18		Heavy to intensive ISN user		Moderate to low ISN user	
	n	%total	n	%cat.	n	%cat.	n	%cat.	N	%cat.
When browsing stories on social networks	**214**	51%	61	49%	154	52%	62	54%	153	50%
When posting on your account	**26**	6%	5	4%	21	7%	8	7%	17	6%
When accessing music or videos	**131**	31%	44	35%	87	30%	41	35%	90	30%
When playing games online or via an App	**53**	13%	26	21%	27	9%	21	18%	32	11%
When searching for information or news	**97**	23%	28	23%	68	23%	33	29%	64	21%
When making purchases (clothes, books, games, sporting equipment etc.)	**46**	11%	9	7%	37	13%	16	14%	30	10%

Attitudes towards digital alcohol advertising

Among the 31% of the general sample who reported not seeing see any alcohol advertising, half stated that they do not use ad blockers. Therefore, lack of exposure can't be fully explained by using this ad control measure. It could be genuinely lower exposure, or reduced recall, due to inattentiveness.

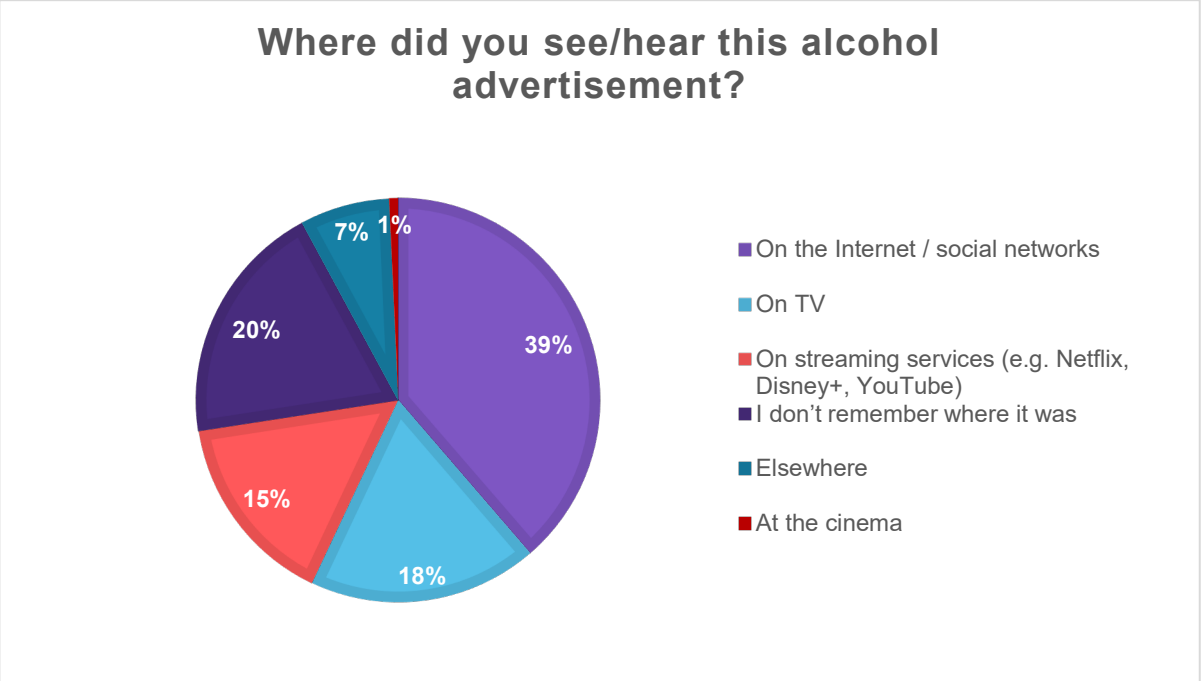


Most of respondents deal with upcoming advertisements by swiping or skipping immediately (65%) or after required period (18%), while only a very small minority watches all the advertisement (4%). 13% those exposed to alcohol advertising reports using ad-blocking tools.



Impact of the last remembered alcohol advertising

Internet/Social networks and TV remain the primary exposure source for alcohol advertising (39% and 18%). Streaming services account for a smaller share (15%).

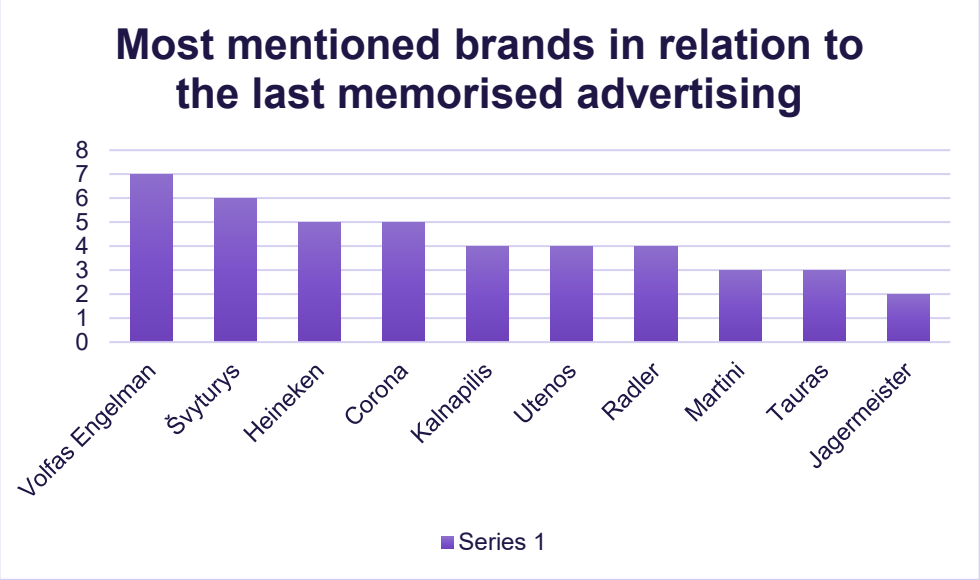


Memorising advertised alcohol brand

Only 19% when asked to remember the name of the alcohol brand advertised recalled a specific brand.

Among those who did remember the advertised brand, 31.1% reported having tried the product, while 50.6% said they had not, suggesting that brand recognition could be linked to familiarity or personal experience with the product rather than to promotional content.

Among respondents who remembered a specific brand, most mentioned brands based on mention frequency are: Volfas Engelman and Švyturys (local beer brands), Heineken and Corona (international beer brands). Overall, out of 10 mentioned brands – 7 are beer brands.



Desire to drink generated

The results indicate that most respondents report no direct behavioural reaction following exposure to alcohol advertising. Overall, 90% of respondents state that the last remembered advertisement did not make them want to try the advertised product, and they did not subsequently try the advertised alcohol brand.

Nevertheless, a non-negligible minority reports some degree of influence. One in ten respondents indicate that the last remembered advertisement prompted a desire to try the advertised type of alcohol, and a similar proportion report having tried the advertised brand since then.

Differences by age show that adults are more likely than minors to report both wanting to try the advertised alcohol (12% vs. 7%) and having tried it (12% vs. 6%). However, these differences remain modest in size. Gender differences are limited, with men and women reporting broadly similar responses, confirming the absence of a strong gender pattern in reporting advertising-related reactions.

As expected, drinking status appears more closely associated with reported reactions. Drinkers are more likely than non-drinkers to report both a desire to try the advertised product (13% vs. 5%) and actual consumption of the advertised brand (13% vs. 3%). However, even among drinkers, majority report no direct behavioural change after exposure to alcohol advertising.

Table 7. Effective desire to drink alcohol prompted by alcohol advertising in Lithuania (n=419)

What the last advert **triggered** in you ?		***Wanted to try this specific type of alcohol***			***Tried the advertised alcohol brand since then***		
		n	*%total*	*%cat.*	n	*%total*	*%cat.*
In the whole country sample		**43**	***10%***	***10%***	**42**	***10%***	***10%***
Age	Under 18	9	*2%*	*7%*	8	*2%*	*6%*
	More than 18	34	*8%*	*12%*	34	*8%*	*12%*
Gender	Male	30	*7%*	*15%*	30	*7%*	*14%*
	Female	12	*3%*	*6%*	12	*3%*	*6%*
	Non-binary	1	*0%*	*20%*	0	*0%*	*0%*
	Other	0	*0%*	*0%*	0	*0%*	*0%*
Drinking status	Drinkers	36	*8%*	*13%*	37	*9%*	*13%*
	Non drinkers	8	*2%*	*5%*	5	*1%*	*3%*

Respondents do not recognize advertising as a mechanism that is influencing their alcohol consumption behaviour. Out of 10 brands mentioned by the name seven are beer brands. Beer is the most advertised and most popular alcoholic beverage in Lithuania. It is likely that consumption is more connected with the drink type (beer, wine, strong drinks) rather than specific brand, which makes it more difficult to recognize influence of advertising. less connection with the specific. When prompted by advertising of an alcoholic beverage, or a similar zero alcohol beverage, consumers still choose beer, as evidenced by the recall of brands.

Perceived effectiveness of alcohol advertising on the Internet among young people

The results show that a large majority of respondents perceive alcohol advertising on the Internet as effective in influencing young people. Overall, 83% of the Lithuanian sample believe that online alcohol advertising is influencing young people, while 17% consider it ineffective.

Adults are slightly more likely than minors to perceive online alcohol advertising as effective (85% vs. 81%), suggesting only a modest age-related variation in perceptions. Gender patterns indicate broadly

similar perceptions among men and women. While women show a slightly higher level of agreement than men (86% vs. 82%), this difference remains small. Responses among non-binary and other respondents should be interpreted with caution due to very small numbers.

Drinking status does not appear to strongly differentiate perceptions. Both drinkers and non-drinkers largely agree that alcohol advertising on the Internet works on young people (84% and 82%, respectively), indicating a widely shared view across consumption profiles.

Socio-economic differences are also limited, with respondents from both superior and lower to intermediate economic categories reporting high and comparable levels of agreement (81% and 85%). Similarly, awareness of the ban on advertising alcohol to minors does not substantially alter perceptions, as agreement remains high among both those aware (84%) and unaware (83%) of the ban.

More pronounced differences emerge in relation to normative positions on regulation policy. Respondents who fully or somewhat agree with a ban on alcohol advertising to minors are more likely to consider online advertising effective (88%) than those who disagree or are uncertain (73%). By contrast, intensity of internet and social network (ISN) use shows only limited variation, with heavy to intensive users slightly less likely than moderate to low users to perceive advertising as effective (80% vs. 85%).

Table 8. General opinion on alcohol advertising in Lithuania (n=419)

Do you think alcohol advertising on the Internet **works** on young people?		***It works***			***It does not work***		
		n	% total	*%cat.*	n	% total	*%cat.*
In the whole country sample		**350**	**83%**	***83%***	**69**	***17%***	**17%**
Age	Under 18	101	24%	*81%*	24	*6%*	*19%*
	More than 18	249	59%	*85%*	45	*11%*	*15%*
Gender	Male	169	40%	*82%*	-17	*-4%*	*-8%*
	Female	177	42%	*86%*	29	*7%*	*14%*
	Non-binary	3	1%	*100%*	0	*0%*	*0%*
	Other	0	0%	*0%*	3	*1%*	*100%*
Drinking status	Drinkers	233	56%	*84%*	44	*11%*	*16%*
	Non drinkers	116	28%	*82%*	25	*6%*	*18%*
Do you think alcohol advertising on the Internet **works** on young people?		***It works***			***It does not work***		
		n	% total	*%cat.*	n	% total	*%cat.*
Economic category	Superior	126	30%	81%	30	*7%*	19%
	Lower and Intermediate	223	53%	85%	40	*10%*	15%
Knowledge of the ban to advertise alcohol to minors	Yes	155	37%	*84%*	29	*7%*	*16%*
	No	195	46%	*83%*	41	*10%*	*17%*
Acceptance of ban on advertising to minors	Fully or somewhat agree	259	62%	*88%*	36	*9%*	*12%*
	Fully or somewhat disagree or don't know	90	22%	*73%*	34	*8%*	*27%*
Internet or social network (ISN) use	Heavy to intensive use	91	22%	*80%*	23	*6%*	*20%*
	Low to moderate use	259	62%	*85%*	46	*11%*	*15%*

General opinion and acceptance of alcohol control policies

General opinion on alcohol advertising

Over one third (31%) of total Lithuania sample report full disapproval on alcohol marketing, while 7% report full approval, with somewhat lower numbers among minors (4%) vs adults (8%). Majority of respondents (62%) reported mixed feelings or no clear opinion. Full disapproval is more frequently reported by the adults (33%) vs minors (24%), female (32%) vs male (29%) non-drinkers (41%) vs drinkers (25%) and persons of superior socioeconomic status (35%) vs (28%), responders with lower use of ISN (32%) vs higher intensity users (28%) and those who approve the advertising ban (34%) vs those who do not or are unsure (23%). Knowledge of the existing ban resulted in lower disproval of advertising 28%, compared to those who are not aware of the ban (32%).

Alcohol consumption is significantly related to attitude towards alcohol advertising. Non-drinkers were significantly more likely than drinkers to fully disapprove of advertising (41% vs 25%; χ^2 (1) = 10.28, p = 0.001).

Although respondents who support advertising restriction were more likely to fully disapprove of advertising than those who do not support or are unsure (34% vs 23%), this difference was not statistically significant (χ^2 (1) = 0.66, p = 0.42).

Table 9. General opinion on alcohol advertising

How would you summarize your **opinion** on alcohol marketing?		Full disapproval			Full approval			Mixed or no opinion		
		n	% total	*%cat.*	n	% total	*%cat.*	n	% total	*%cat.*
In the whole country sample		**128**	**31%**	***31%***	**30**	***7%***	**7%**	**261**	***62%***	**62%**
Age	Under 18	31	7%	*24%*	6	*1%*	*4%*	89	*21%*	*71%*
	More than 18	97	23%	*33%*	24	*6%*	*8%*	172	*41%*	*59%*
Gender	Male	60	14%	*29%*	14	*3%*	*7%*	133	*32%*	*64%*
	Female	67	16%	*32%*	15	*4%*	*7%*	124	*30%*	*60%*
	Non-binary	1	0%	*28%*	0	*0%*	*0%*	2	*1%*	*72%*
	Other	0	0%	*0%*	1	*0%*	*51%*	1	*0%*	*49%*
Drinking status	Drinkers	70	17%	*25%*	27	*6%*	*10%*	181	*43%*	*65%*
	Non drinkers	58	14%	*41%*	3	*1%*	*2%*	80	*19%*	*57%*
Economic category	Superior	54	13%	35%	8	*2%*	5%	94	*22%*	61%
	Lower and Intermediate	74	18%	28%	22	*5%*	8%	167	*40%*	63%
Knowledge of the ban to advertise alcohol to minors	Yes	52	12%	*28%*	14	*3%*	*8%*	118	*28%*	*64%*
	No	76	18%	*32%*	16	*4%*	*7%*	143	*34%*	*61%*
Acceptance of ban on advertising to minors	Fully or somewhat agree	99	24%	*34%*	24	*6%*	*8%*	172	*41%*	*58%*
	Fully or somewhat disagree or don't know	29	7%	*23%*	6	*1%*	*5%*	90	*21%*	*72%*
Internet or social network (ISN) use	Heavy to intensive use	32	8%	***28%***	12	*3%*	***10%***	71	*17%*	***62%***
	Low to moderate use	96	23%	***32%***	18	*4%*	***6%***	190	*45%*	***63%***

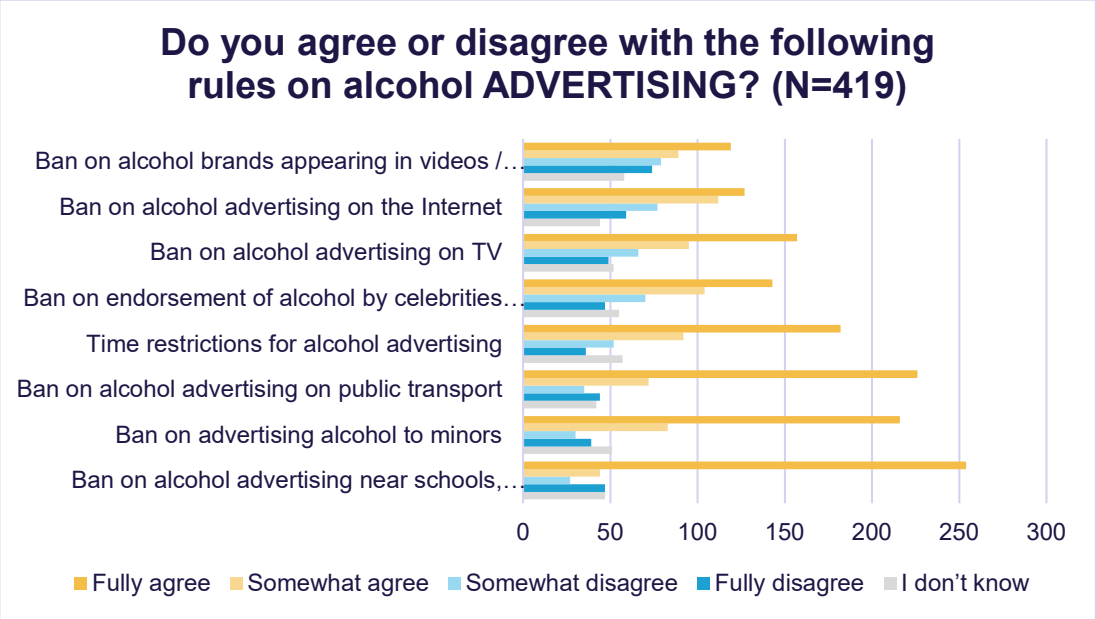
Knowledge of regulation on alcohol advertising towards MINORS

The findings provide insights to awareness of the respondents regarding national regulations on alcohol advertising: overall nearly 60% mostly correctly identify prohibition to advertise to minors (44 % know that alcohol advertising is banned towards minors for all alcohol, 15% respond correctly that alcohol is banned towards minors everywhere). However, there is a significant proportion (17%) that is completely wrong, while 24% admit not knowing. Rest of responses include different inaccuracies. This confirms that population is more aware of legally binding advertising bans even with somewhat fragmented implementation, than industry self-regulation measures that are prevalent in other countries. Informed population is an important asset in improvements of implementation in the future.



Acceptance of advertising regulation

The Lithuanian respondents overwhelmingly agreed with a series of principles of prohibitions or restrictions presented to them. These results suggest widespread acceptance among these young people of strict regulation of alcohol advertising.



GENERAL CONCLUSION

Awareness of the exposure to alcohol advertising

The results indicate that exposure to alcohol advertising in Lithuania remains widespread across both digital and traditional media. Overall, 83% of respondents report having seen alcohol advertising on either digital or audiovisual media in the past 30 days. Exposure is most frequently reported on social networks (70%) and on the Internet more broadly (65%), while national television is less prominent channel, with half of respondents (50%) reporting exposure.

The Lithuanian sample survey results reveal widespread and uniform perceived exposure to positive portrayals and advertising of alcohol across all media types (78%). There were no differences in prevalence of this perception between adults and minors, and only minor differences between male (80%) and female (76%), drinkers (79%) and non-drinkers (78%).

The large prevalence of positive exposure in the context of full alcohol advertising ban and very strict marketing regulation can be explained by qualitative interviewee data informing of the common confusion over the advertisements of zero alcohol beverages of the same brands as alcoholic drinks. Interviewees who recalled seeing alcohol brand advertising later confirmed that these were likely zero alcohol versions of most popular brands. Lack of significant prevalence difference across age, gender, and socioeconomic groups confirms that legally binding restrictions affect whole society, not just groups with certain characteristics.

While internet surveys show high level of exposure to positive portrayal of alcohol, qualitative interviews reveal lower perception of exposure and attitudes towards alcohol advertising that are characterized by indifference or emotional distance. Many interviewees stated that alcohol advertising online is nonintrusive. It is perceived as an unavoidable part of contemporary media environments, but also as something that can be skipped, scrolled past or closed.

Social media from both survey and qualitative interviews is identified as the main source of exposure via internet: the most frequent exposure occurred while browsing stories on social networks (51%), which is confirmed by comments from the interviewees of the qualitative study. Another important source of advertising exposure were posts promoting events in bars and venues (27%) and posts from a friend or an ordinary person (27%). Importantly, even while online alcohol advertising is also banned in Lithuania, at least 23% respondents reported they have been exposed to posts created by alcohol brands. This confirms research showing that main perpetrator violating advertising bans is industry, rather than individuals. Also very likely, that zero-alcohol brand beverages confusion contributes to this result.

Knowledge of advertising ban vs not being aware resulted in higher perceived exposure to alcohol advertising (80% vs 77%), as did disagreement with the ban (81% vs 77%). Drinkers were more exposed to alcohol advertising in online settings, but inconsistently not in all media, TV or cinema. Even though universal across media advertising ban in Lithuania does not seem to confirm consistent protection of young people from exposure: however online exposure for minors (61%) is lower than for adults (68%).

The role of ADAM in motivations to drink alcohol

Both survey respondents and interviewees, when commenting on the impact of alcohol advertising on their behaviour, overwhelmingly downplayed its influence on their own drinking, denying that advertising triggers alcohol consumption or affects personal drinking decisions. At the same time most confirmed that online advertising in their opinion is effective and increases consumption. Most internet survey respondents (74.2%) and interview participants reported that their drinking behaviour is not influenced by

advertising, while 81% of respondents think that advertising is in general effective in influencing young people drinking. Respondents and interviewees seem to be more able to recognize external influences on other people's behaviour than their own. In the qualitative interviews, very few respondents explicitly like an advertisement or admit being influenced by a celebrity or influencer endorsement as a reason for drinking alcohol. Also, only 10% of the Lithuanian sample admitted of wanting to try or trying specific advertised alcohol, and only 7% and 6 % among minors. Interviewees also expressed the need to protect young people and overall support towards control policies. Drinkers reported slightly higher impact of advertising on both wishes to drink and trying a specific alcoholic beverage. Qualitative study revealed that family traditions and permissiveness towards drinking behaviour for teenagers influence availability of alcohol for them, also peer behaviours and peer family traditions are mentioned as important factors influencing drinking behaviour. Both drinkers and non-drinkers referred to personal limits and self-regulation, reinforcing the perception that drinking decisions are conscious and individual, even when socially influenced.

Impact of regulations in the national framework

Even though the knowledge of current alcohol control policy measures implemented in Lithuania was relatively low, nearly all interviewees and a substantial majority of respondents (72.8%) expressed support for a ban on alcohol advertising targeting minors.

Qualitative interviews reveal focus on harmful social consequences of drinking and relatively low knowledge of specific health harms. This awareness confirms high prevalence of harm from others drinking to minors in Lithuania (Tamutiene et al, 2018).

Even though opinions regarding alcohol advertising are generally undecided with 62% reporting mixed feelings or no definite opinion, however significant proportion (31%) of total Lithuania sample report full disapproval on alcohol marketing, while only 7% report full approval (lower among minors (4%) vs adults (8%)). Full disapproval of alcohol advertising is more frequently reported by the adults (33%) vs minors (24%), female (32%) vs male (29%) non-drinkers (41%) vs drinkers (25%) and persons of higher socioeconomic status (35%) vs (28%), responders with lower use of ISN (32%) vs higher intensity users (28%) and those who approve the advertising ban (34%) vs those who do not or are unsure (23%). Qualitative interviews confirm that young people strongly favour stricter regulation of advertising and lowering access to alcohol for minors.

Overall, we can therefore conclude that current regulation and implementation levels do not consistently and sufficiently protect young people and minors from exposure to advertising and positive marketing messages about alcohol consumption.

The combined results of survey and qualitative interviews confirm increased exposure towards young people with advertisement of zero alcoholic beverages. This is recognized by young people and children as advertising; it contributes to alcohol brand awareness and recognition; also normalizes positive messages related to alcohol consumption. Recommended policy measures would be prohibiting alibi marketing, advertising of the zero-alcohol drinks that resemble alcoholic beverages and implementing Norwegian model for this control. Another issue is industry and influencer marketing monitoring and control, which requires novel approaches to be implemented effectively.

Issue that also emerged in the survey and interviews is enormous imbalance between perceived exposure of high impact positive alcohol messaging across media and very low prevalence of preventive messages and information on alcohol harms. Therefore, as a policy measure of the Best Buys it is not enough to comprehensively restrict advertising and marketing of alcohol, but preventive messaging must be incorporated in the packaging and all sales processes, to increase the reach and awareness of alcohol related health harms.

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