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High level conference

Rethinking Prevention: A Dialogue with Youth

Preliminary Agenda

At a time of fiscal tightening, reducing countries' direct health expenditures has become an urgent priority. One effective way to achieve this is through prevention, by reducing the incidence of injuries, diseases, and accidents that are preventable. This is especially relevant for youth, who will ultimately bear the long-term social and economic costs of preventable harm. It is also a matter of deep concern to young health professionals, who increasingly find themselves treating preventable conditions when their skills and care could be directed toward non-preventable conditions.

Among the many risk factors contributing to health costs, alcohol stands out as particularly significant for youth. Unlike tobacco, nutrition, or physical activity, areas where public awareness has improved, there remains a striking lack of knowledge about the risks associated with alcohol. Citizens, especially young people, are left without the information they need to make informed decisions. Alcohol is still widely portrayed as a cultural heritage, an economic driver, or an ordinary commodity. Yet recent evidence, including from the World Health Organization, confirms that *no level of alcohol consumption is safe for health*. These conflicting messages are further compounded by the absence of mandatory labelling on alcohol products, which would provide consumers with clear, evidence-based health information.

Against this backdrop, **MEP Manuela Ripa is convening a special event in the European Parliament** to place youth perspectives at the centre of a critical conversation on prevention, through the lens of alcohol use, awareness, and labelling. The event will bring together a diversity of voices: youth advocates, young health professionals, policymakers, and researchers. Its aim is to foster a meaningful, evidence-informed dialogue on how prevention policies can better respond to the needs and concerns of younger generations.

This event will give the floor to youth representatives from across Europe who are calling for stronger public health and public safety protections in alcohol policy. Drawing on their lived experience, data, and recent research, these young voices will explain why alcohol matters to them, not only as a health issue, but as a question of fairness, accountability, and political responsibility.

With a view to advancing concrete, evidence-based policy action, the event will also feature open dialogue between youth and policymakers. Discussions will go beyond the health sector alone, exploring social, cultural, and regulatory dimensions of alcohol that youth feel must be addressed if Europe is to take prevention seriously.

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High Level Conference Programme

European Parliament - in Room SPINELLI 6Q1
Tuesday November 4th, 2025 - 18:30pm – 20:30pm

The event is hosted by **Manuela Ripa**, MEP and co-hosted by **Vytenis Andriukaitis**, MEP

This event will be moderated by youth representatives

18:30 – 18:45 Opening Remarks

MEP Manuela Ripa and MEP Vytenis Andriukaitis

Why this event matters: prevention, youth, and alcohol policy in the EU context

18:45 – 19:00 Framing the Conversation

From prevention to empowerment: why youth need to be able to make informed choices about alcohol.

Speakers: youth representatives

19:00 – 19:30 Panel 1: Prevention and Why Alcohol Matters

Moderated discussion with youth representatives and experts

Speakers: **MEP Aurelijus Veryga**, **MEP Marta Temido**, **MEP Romana Jerković** (tbc) & youth representatives

19:30 – 19:45 Keynote Presentation

Beyond the Label: What QR Codes Really Say

Presentation of findings from the youth-led study on QR codes on alcohol products in 13 European countries

Speakers: youth representatives

19:45 – 20:15 Panel 2: Policy Blind Spots and Opportunities

Moderated discussion with youth, public health advocates, and MEPs

Speakers: **MEP Cristina Guarda** (tbc), **MEP Kristiyan Vigenin** (tbc), **MEP Zala Tomašič** (tbc), **Mathis Heydtmann**, EASL Hepatologist & youth representatives

20:15 – 20:30 Closing Remarks and Call to Action

Youth representative and **MEP Manuela Ripa**

A message to policymakers: protect this generation—and those to come