

Health and Safety European Standards for nightlife venues

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Abstract

There is growing concern to understand those interventions which when effectively implemented may bring reduction in the harms associated with recreational nightlife venues. Management of drinking environments vary across Europe and we are faced with the need to set standards across European countries. The aim of this study is to present evidence highlighted by literature to a diverse sample of European recreational industry representatives and other key stakeholders (74 participants in 14 European countries), to ascertain their judgements on level of implementation, acceptance, effectiveness and regulation to propose a set of standards be implemented in European recreational nightlife settings. Results revealed that most industry representatives display high rates of agreement with those preventive interventions deemed most important by evidence, including those concerning venue management, underage checkouts, staff training and collaboration with the police. However, participants expressed doubts on further regulation fearing it would mean further obstacles such as added paperwork and costs. Indeed, in countries where night-time economy is not well developed or is already suffering the impact of the economic crisis, we found that nightlife industry is not keen to adopt measures they may perceive to lower their incomes; while in countries where these practices are widely implemented, industry representatives were reluctant for these practices to be regulated or enforced since it would require a higher level of compliance. Regulating and enforcing the standards highlighted both by literature and industry representatives should be a priority to ensure promotion of health and safety in nightlife premises.

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