

**Question for written answer E-001953/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE)

Subject: Harmful drinking among middle-class over-50s

According to the WHO, harmful drinking is 'a pattern of drinking that causes damage to health, either physical or mental'. It has often been associated with lower socio-economic groups (see the EU Action Plan on Youth Drinking – 2014-2016). However, as highlighted by an article published in the online journal the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Open, 'harmful drinking in later life is more prevalent among people who exhibit a lifestyle associated with affluence and with a "successful" ageing process'.

Paradoxically, the research reports that better health and higher educational attainment are positively associated with an increased risk of harmful drinking. Rosanna O'Connor, director of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco at Public Health England, said that about 1 in 5 adults regularly drink at levels that can damage their health, leading to serious, but preventable, conditions such as stroke, some cancers, depression and liver disease. Many are unaware of the harm caused, especially from drinking frequently throughout the week.

Although several studies and research have been conducted at EU level to prevent harmful drinking, and considering that it represents a serious concern for Europe, what could the Commission do to help improve knowledge about this emerging but extremely worrying phenomenon?