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Purchasing and consuming alcohol

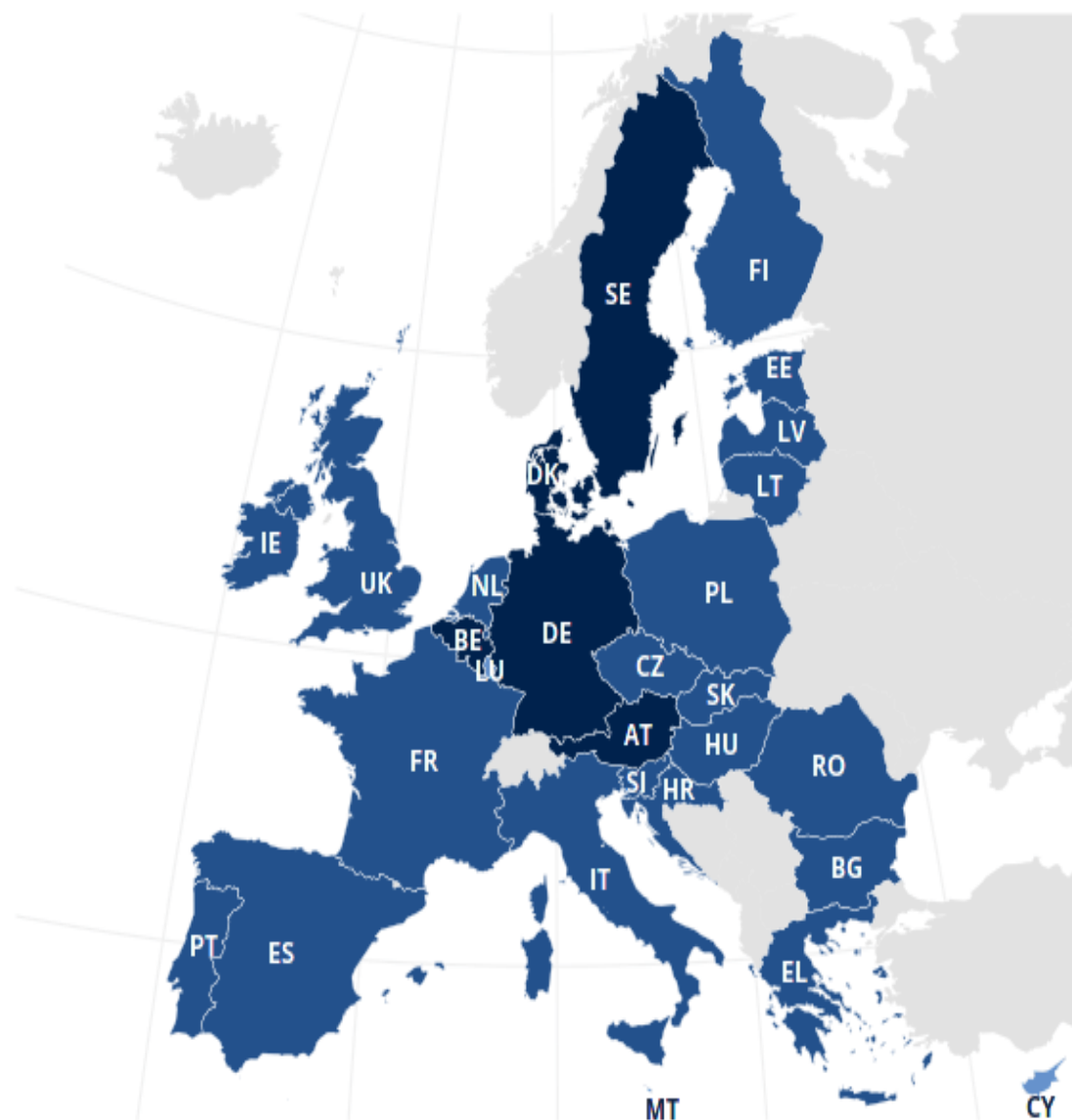
The CRC Committee suggests that the minimum age for the purchase and consumption of alcohol and tobacco should be 18 years (CRC General Comment No. 20, 2016).

The Council recommendation on the drinking of alcohol by young people, in particular children and adolescents (2001/458/EC) clearly states that children should not be targeted by manufacturers and that regulatory control of retailing should be strengthened.

In the majority of Member States, children cannot purchase alcohol. A limited number of Member States only allow children to purchase beverages with low percentages of distilled alcohol.

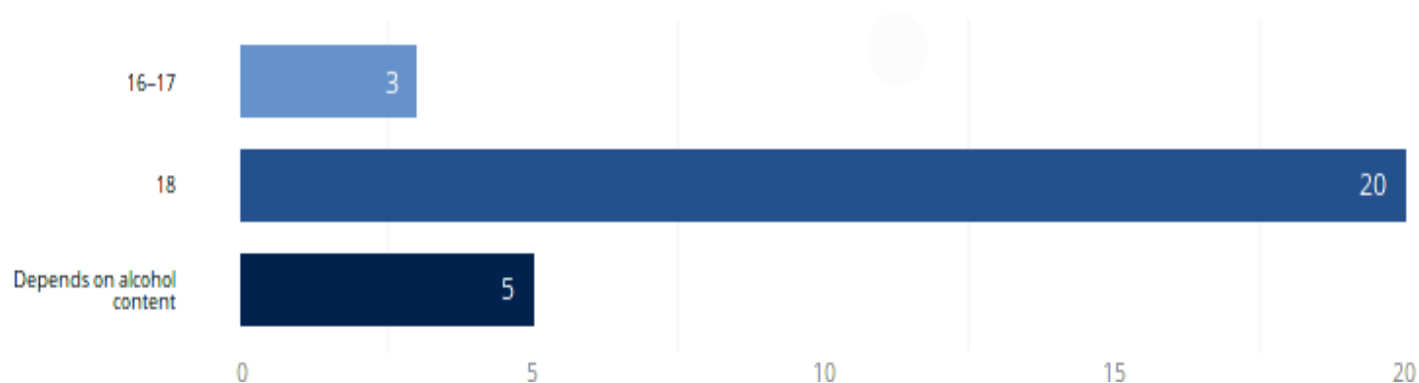
The consumption of alcohol is regulated by half of the Member States. In general, the same age requirements as those for purchasing alcohol apply.

Age at which children can purchase alcohol



© EuroGeographics for the administrative boundaries © FRA - All rights reserved - Minimum age requirements related to rights of the child in the EU, 2017
| Year : 2017
Source: FRA, <http://fra.europa.eu>

Age at which children can purchase alcohol



View full dataset in data explorer. (<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/minag?>

[dataSource=MINAG_en_62756&media=png&width=740&topic=group05&question=MINAG_HE06&](http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/minag?dataSource=MINAG_en_62756&media=png&width=740&topic=group05&question=MINAG_HE06&)

Key aspects

Purchase

- In 21 Member States (**Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden** and the **United Kingdom**), children cannot purchase alcohol.
- **Belgium, Denmark** and **Germany** set 16 years as the minimum age for purchasing beverages containing less than 1.2 % of distilled alcohol and 18 years for buying spirits (more than 1.2 % of distilled alcohol). **Sweden** set the minimum age for purchasing beverages with more than 3.5 % of alcohol at 20 years.
- The minimum age to purchase alcohol in **Cyprus** and **Malta** is 17 years; in Luxembourg, it is 16 years.
- In **Austria**, purchasing alcohol is regulated at the regional level. There are two different age requirements – either 16 or 18 years – depending on the region and the percentage of alcohol involved.

Consumption

- In 13 Member States (**Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal** and **Slovakia**), the minimum age requirement for purchasing alcohol is the same as for consuming alcoholic beverages. In **Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Portugal**, the minimum age requirement for alcohol consumption only relates to public spaces.
- Other Member States set two different legal requirements to purchase and consume alcohol. For example, in **Estonia**, the consumption of alcohol is permissible only from 18 years, but there are no set regulations for purchasing alcohol. In the **United Kingdom**, in England, Wales and Scotland, children aged 16 or 17 years are allowed to consume beer, wine or cider with a meal when accompanied by an adult, but they can only buy it from the age of 18 years. In **Sweden**, the legal age for being served alcohol (in restaurants, etc.) is 18 years.
- Eleven Member States (**Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania** and **Slovenia**) do not impose any age requirements for the consumption of alcohol in their national legal frameworks.

DOWNLOADS

24 April 2018

Excel file: Minimum age requirements concerning children's rights in the EU - Country data on Marriage and sexual consent; Citizenship; Political Participation; Religion; Health (513.59 KB)
(https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2017-status-