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MOVEMENT

ALCOHOL AND YOUTH IN MONTENEGRO

MESSAGES FROM
THE LABYRINTH

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The publication presents a summary of the key findings of the project “Understanding Pathways to Youth Alcohol Consumption in Montenegro” which Forum MNE implemented with the support of IOGT NTO Movement.

The project included implementation of qualitative research on young people’s attitudes towards alcohol through focus groups and interviews with representatives of institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs) and parents, as well as analysis of relevant documents.

The first part of the publication contains an overview of key laws and data collected regarding the prohibition of the use and sale of alcohol to minors, and the second part presents the findings of qualitative research on the attitudes of young people towards alcohol.

We hope that the collected data and analysis will serve as a basis for further work on improving the current situation when it comes to exposure of children and young people to alcohol, as well as creating a healthy environment for their growth and development.

This question requires a coordinated and multi-sectoral response to which all of us must contribute.

We thank all the participants of the project, researchers, and the Association of Sociologists of Montenegro.

Forum MNE Team

ALCOHOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN MONTENEGRIN SOCIAL REALITY

Young people in Montenegro live in an environment where alcohol is part of everyday life – of cultural, religious and social customs. Alcohol is the most common and the first addiction substance young people try. One of the factors that contributes to the wider consumption of alcohol among young people is its easy availability.

Data from the ESPAD (European School Survey on Alcohol and other Drugs) survey, conducted in Montenegro¹, on a nationally representative sample of 6,776 students from all municipalities, show that almost eight out of ten (77%) students in Montenegro have consumed alcohol at least once until the age of sixteen. More than half of students start drinking at the age of 14 or earlier.

In Montenegro, the sale and serving of alcohol to persons under the age of 18 is prohibited and regulated by the Law on Tourism and Hospitality²:

- *Serving alcoholic drinks, other drinks and/or beverages containing alcohol to persons younger than 18 years of age in a hospitality facility shall be prohibited.*
- *In a hospitality facility, in which alcoholic drinks, other drinks and/or beverages containing alcohol are served, information regarding the prohibition to serve these to persons younger than 18 years of age must be displayed in a visible place.*

and the Law on Public Order and Peace³:

- *A legal entity that sells or enables the use of alcoholic drinks to a person younger than 18 years of age (...) will be fined from 500 euro to 5,000 euro for a misdemeanor.*

An entrepreneur who commits an offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be fined from 300 euro to 2,000 euro.

1) Đurišić T, Golubović Lj, Mugoša B. **European Survey on the use of Psychoactive Substances and Non-substance Addictions among Young People: ESPAD 2019 Montenegro. Podgorica: Institute for Public Health of Montenegro. Podgorica, 2020**

2) Law on Tourism and Hospitality, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 2/2018, 4/2018, 13/2018, 25/2019, 67/2019 and 76/2020; Article 91

3) Law on Public Order and Peace, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 064/11 of 29.12.2011, 056/20 of 15.06.2020, Article 25

The responsible person in the legal entity who commits the misdemeanor referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be fined from 300 to 1,500 euros.

A natural person who commits an offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be fined from 250 to 1,000 euros.

Despite clear prohibitions, the laws are not adequately enforced. 79% of high school students consider any alcoholic beverage as easily available.⁴

Inspection supervision over the application of the Law on Tourism and Hospitality⁵ is performed by the competent administrative body for inspection affairs through tourist inspectors and local authority units through authorized inspectors. Tourist inspectors control the prohibition on providing alcohol to minors in hospitality establishments for which the Ministry issues a permit, and the competent local government bodies control the application of the law in hospitality establishments issued by the local government.

For non-compliance with the relevant provisions of this law, fines for legal entities in the amount of 2,000 to 20,000 euros⁶ are prescribed, if in a hospitality facility persons under 18 years of age are being served alcoholic beverages or beverages containing alcohol, as well as fines from 1,000 to 10,000 euros⁷ if the information regarding the prohibition to serve alcohol to minors is not displayed in a visible place.

According to the data of the Directorate for Inspection Affairs, in 2018, 16 irregularities related to the dispensing of alcoholic beverages to minors were identified, 50 in connection with the failure to highlight the label "prohibited serving of alcohol to minors", and 26 misdemeanor warrants were issued in the total amount of 27,000.00 euros.⁸ In the period from 2019 to 2021, 3 irregularities were identified.⁹

4) Đurišić T, Golubović Lj, Mugoša B. **European Survey on the use of Psychoactive Substances and Non-substance Addictions among Young People: ESPAD 2019 Montenegro. Podgorica: Institute for Public Health of Montenegro. Podgorica, 2020**

5) Law on Tourism and Hospitality, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 2/2018, 4/2018, 13/2018, 25/2019, 67/2019 and 76/2020, Article 121

6) Law on Tourism and Hospitality, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 2/2018, 4/2018, 13/2018, 25/2019, 67/2019 and 76/2020, Article 127

7) Law on Tourism and Hospitality, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 2/2018, 4/2018, 13/2018, 25/2019, 67/2019 and 76/2020, article 128

8) Report on the work of the Directorate for Inspection Affairs for 2018, available at: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/8932a15b-e2d3-466f-8c10-6b99b8de358a>

9) Decision on the request for free access to information UPI ZH 1001-037/21-176

During 2020, the Police Directorate registered only 2 violations related to the violation of Article 25 of the Law on Public Order and Peace. The number of registered violations in 2019 was 7, and in 2018 there were 6 violations.¹⁰

There are no unified data on the number of performed controls and identified irregularities in local authority units. There are no data on controls or supervision of the sale of alcohol to minors in retail outlets. The Directorate for Inspection Affairs redirected us for information to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, which is responsible for the implementation of the Law on Spirit Drinks.¹¹ This law regulates the conditions for the production and marketing of spirit drinks. However, as this law does not contain provisions regulating the prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 18, the Agricultural Inspection or the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management is not competent to control the sale of alcohol to minors.

The final report on the implementation of the *National Strategy for the Prevention of Harmful Alcohol Use and Alcohol-Induced Disorders in Montenegro 2013-2020*¹² shows that the results achieved are modest. Implemented activities related to the prohibition of the sale and serving of alcohol to minors were mainly focused on the education of hospitality staff. There is no data on the number of trained hospitality staff.

If we truly intend to provide children and young people with a healthy and safe environment for growth and development, and protect them from the consequences of alcohol consumption, we must improve and harmonize the legal framework for reducing the physical availability of alcohol, which includes restrictions on selling and serving alcohol and alcoholic beverages. Conditions must be provided and the capacities of relevant institutions, for consistent application of the laws, must be improved.

Ignorance is not an excuse, and inaction bears responsibility.

Andelija Lučić, Editor

10) Data from the annual reports on the work and situation in the administrative areas within the competence of the Ministry of the Interior for 2020 and 2019 are available at: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/92516df8-78eb-4ec7-986a-8f951b4f5611> and <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/9938507c-1055-45b1-9c09-a90868ae5fa2>

11) Law on Spirit Drinks, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 53/2016 of 11.8.2016.

12) <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/f6341633-f457-4901-ba3d-7e6e2213d45c>

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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON YOUTH ATTITUDES TOWARD ALCOHOL IN MONTENEGRO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY¹³

Given that the topic of alcohol consumption among young people in Montenegro was insufficiently studied, two research methods were used for the research - focus groups and interviews. Aforesaid methods were considered to best contribute to the project objectives, namely understanding the basic conditions and factors that contribute the most to the increasing consumption of alcoholic substances among youth.

Focus group research methodology

Focus group interviews are a type of qualitative research technique that involves a series of group interviews, with participants who are similar in some characteristics or experiences, in order to discuss certain issues relevant to the research problem.

In order to get a clearer picture of alcohol use among young people in Montenegro, we implemented a focus group research method in eight Montenegrin municipalities. We ensured that all three Montenegrin regions - north, central and south - are equally represented in the research. Focus groups were implemented in the following cities: Berane, Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, Podgorica, Nikšić, Herceg Novi, Budva, and Bar. A total of 16 focus groups were conducted, two in each city. The research was carried out during November 2021.

Since the research problem involved young people, interviews were conducted with the high school population, i.e. young people aged 15 to 18, which was the basic criterion in selecting participants. Other criteria for selecting participants were as follows:

13) For the purposes of this publication only basic information about the applied methodology are provided.

Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

Place of residence: 1. City, suburb; 2. Village

Alcohol consumption: 1. They did not consume alcohol or did not try alcohol until they were 14 years old; 2. They tried alcohol before they were 14 years old.

The number of young people who participated in the research is 137.

Summary of topics used in focus group research:

1. General knowledge of the effects of alcohol on humans
2. Causes of alcohol consumption
 - Socio-cultural factor
 - Peers as a factor
 - Parents as a factor
 - Availability of drinks as a factor
3. Alcohol consumption among young people

At the end of the conversation, research participants filled out a short questionnaire containing four questions. Participants were asked to assess the sincerity of participants, to answer a question if they have consumed alcohol in the last month, to list the types of alcoholic beverages they consume most often, and to suggest what needs to be done to reduce alcohol consumption among young people in Montenegro.

Interview research methodology

In addition to the intent to examine what young people think about alcohol consumption and its harmful consequences, the aim of the research was to try to consider possible approaches to prevent alcohol consumption among young people. In order to determine how the widespread consumption of alcohol among young people could be influenced, primarily among those who encounter this substance for the first time, namely young people aged 15 to 18, interviews were conducted with persons who directly or indirectly deal with the problem of alcoholism. Interview participants were selected from public institutions that deal with the issue of alcohol consumption among young people, representatives of NGOs, professors who work with young people, parents, and youth representatives. A total of 20 interviews were conducted.

The interview consisted of four parts. In the introductory part of the interview, the interlocutor was introduced to the basic goals of the conversation and the research itself. This was followed by an introduction of the interlocutor himself/herself, where their basic socio-demographic data and data on the profession were required. The third part of the interview aimed to determine the level of knowledge of the problems caused by alcohol consumption, introduction with the activities carried out by the interlocutor within his/her profession, as well as life experiences related to this problem. In the fourth part, the interlocutors were asked to propose recommendations for the prevention of alcohol consumption among young people.

ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUPS RESEARCH RESULTS

General knowledge of the effects of alcohol

What is alcohol?

During a short brainstorming, young people made their first associations to alcohol. Alcohol is mostly assessed as a harmful and toxic substance. They believe that the effect of alcohol is bad for a person and that it is often addictive, especially if it is used often and in large quantities. Very few participants have a positive approach to alcohol.

It is evil, liquid evil. (Pljevlja, m.)¹⁴

It may be harmful, and it is harmful if we consume it in really huge quantities. I would not recommend it. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Alcohol is like a cigarette, you become addictive. (Bar, f.)

It makes people drink more and more - in a way it is a drug. (Berane, f.)

I just get disgusted when I watch how people end up in movies, when they are drawn to a bad company and everything under the influence of alcohol. Awful. And I know all kinds of alcohol, from beer to cocktails. (Budva, m.)

Alcohol is a psychoactive substance that belongs to depressants, i.e. it reduces the reaction time of some of our functions. (Herceg Novi, f.)

A substance that helps us to relax, and maybe sometimes to enjoy a certain moment, which can change our psyche and lead to some negative activities that we would not do in a sober state. It gives us false courage, it gives us "superpowers" which we later use under its influence. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I think it is a healthy substance (Bar, m.)

14) Abbreviations *m.* and *f.* refer to participants gender.

Bad effects of alcohol

Young people are fully aware of all the bad consequences that alcohol consumption causes. They believe that alcohol consumption often puts young people in a situation where they do not control their actions and lose control over themselves. They often have the opportunity to attend situations in their environment, and most often during nights out, in which excessive alcohol consumption leads to a loss of control, aggressive behavior and violence that results in injuries. They also feel the negative consequences of alcohol consumption personally, and this often manifests itself as hangover, nausea, headache, and nervousness.

People go out of their head when they get drunk. They lose the sense of reality. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

People don't really control themselves then. (Bar, m.)

They are not free at all, they lose control of themselves. Speaking of mental and physical capabilities, I saw a couple of days ago a man sitting by the fountain. When he got up to walk, he tripped over on the sidewalk and hit his head. (Pljevlja, m.)

Well, the inability to control oneself under the influence of alcohol. My friend once fell down the stairs so hard that he barely survived. (Bar, f.)

Well, it's like some traits are kept in a cage, and suddenly that cage opens with alcohol. And then someone gets angry, disappointed, aggressive. (Budva, f.)

We said that it is OK in small doses to raise self-confidence and similar, but when that certain limit is exceeded, it becomes dangerous for us and our environment. (Budva, f.)

Although they do not feel it personally, young people are aware that excessive or long-term alcohol consumption has negative impact on health. They have most often heard about the harmful consequences for their health from their parents, and that warns them not to cross the line when it comes to consumption.

Well, definitely, while we are teenagers, alcohol affects our hormones a lot. If we get addicted to alcohol as young teens, we can have some health consequences. And there are a lot of them today who can't do without alcohol anymore. (Herceg Novi, f.)

I know some people who were just happy, and then passed out in the end. Then people who are a little more emotional, they express their deepest feelings and darkest fears and things like that. It

generally removes that barrier, which may be good, but also may be bad. In addition, of course, it affects brain function, not only when we are under the influence of alcohol, but also later on, if consumed excessively and for a long period of time. My mother always told me: "It slows down development and if you start, if you drink now, you won't develop properly". **(Herceg Novi, f.)**

Negative in every sense. They worsen their health and can harm others under the influence of alcohol. **(Budva, m.)**

Harmful to health in large quantities, can lead to delirium, loss of consciousness, coma. **(Bijelo Polje, m.)**

Every drunkenness leads to the loss of part of the brain cells, we become stupid, we memorize terribly. **(Bijelo Polje, m.)**

Young people also understand the socio-psychological consequences of excessive alcohol consumption. They are aware that excessive alcohol use disrupts relationships between people by leading to conflict and quarrels between them, which can ultimately be fatal. As a result, excessive alcohol use can be a key factor in destroying a family, divorce, but also a factor that breaks friendships. Excessive intoxication destroys social reputation and can lead young people to delinquency.

Separation of the family, in most cases some people die from it. **(Podgorica, m.)**

The biggest problem is the break up and dissolution of the marriage. **(Pljevlja, f.)**

All those emotional consequences, when friends quarrel. **(Pljevlja, f.)**

Men become violent and can commit murder. **(Podgorica, m.)**

Quarrels arise out of nowhere, because of nonsense. **(Pljevlja, f.)**

Even might go in the direction of delinquency under the influence of alcohol. **(Pljevlja, f.)**

Maybe it's the bad social image. It is perhaps the worst thing at our age. I can't say for the elderly, but at our age, it's social reputation. **(Budva, m.)**

"Good" characteristics of alcohol that make people consume it

Regardless of its harmfulness in the socio-psychological and health sense, young people believe that alcohol has a lot of "good" characteristics. Most young people agree that alcohol has the power to relax them, when they

are in the company of peers, and that it boosts fun, helps them to start dancing, to improve mood, to forget things that burden, or make them sad. Most young people agree that the use of alcohol reduces nervousness, provides a sense of security and strengthens self-confidence, facilitates social ties with other people by helping them to break free, communicate, and make friends more easily. Thanks to the use of alcohol, we usually become more talkative, and a few drinks helps young men to be more confident when making a move on girls.

People relax when they drink. And it boosts their confidence. (Budva, f.)

To forget the things that burden them. (Nikšić, f.)

We start dancing and not just looking at phones. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Well, I think that a good feature of alcohol, although I don't think there are many of them, is that it is a symbol of joy. (Herceg Novi, f.)

You can say what you wouldn't say when sober. (Berane, f.)

It connects people somehow. When we go out, everyone is at their table at the beginning of the evening. And then when we drink a little, we are all brothers. (Herceg Novi, f.)

They are probably less insecure (refers to young men). (Budva, f.)

They drink alcohol to forget about problems. (Bar, f.)

Something we would not otherwise do when we are sober. (Bar, f.)

If someone else is in that same state, we fully understand each other. We all know each other and it is important that we have fun. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Well, the good features are that we feel a little more free. (Bar, m.)

And it's easier for me to make a move on girls, for sure. (Bar, m.)

Some young people, dominantly young men who do not consume or very rarely consume alcohol, believe that alcohol has no good sides and that it often serves only to justify some bad actions, to serve as a kind of an alibi.

Well, I think there are none. I can say that I consume alcohol purely for a good mood, but I don't think that a supplement is necessary for a good mood. (Budva, m.)

There are no good sides. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I don't think it has good characteristics and that it is a delusion. (Bar, m.)

Justification - whatever happens we can say that we were under the influence of alcohol. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

To justify ourselves after some act: I was drunk, I didn't know what I was doing. (Pljevlja, m.)

As a good characteristic of alcohol, which is mentioned by young people, and is widespread in our society, is that this substance can improve health, i.e. help with health problems, and is therefore, used for medical purposes.

It is sometimes used for medical purposes. (Berane, f.)

Alcohol in certain amounts can improve health. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Why do adults drink?

When asked why adults drink, young people gave fairly uniformed answers. Interestingly, the view of alcohol consumption in adults differs greatly from the view that refers to young people. Namely, as we have seen, young people see a lot of positive aspects in their own alcohol consumption, such as a better mood, gaining friendships, getting rid of nervousness, and increasing self-confidence. However, the consumption of alcohol by adults, on the other hand, is mostly associated with life problems that adults have, i.e. to escape from problems, stress, family-life hardships, and much less they drink for joy, fun. Most young people, regardless of their gender, believe that adults consume alcohol mainly when they are sad, worried, when they have some trouble, to forget about problems, to relieve themselves, because their life is monotonous. Also, young people believe that adults make their own decisions about their lives, so they have more freedom to choose when to drink. Consumption of alcohol for adults is more a matter of habit, something that goes without saying when you are grown-up. It turns out, therefore, that young people view the adult world as a period full of problems and obligations that mostly burden them, and that they rarely drink to have fun, relax, or celebrate some success.

Well, elderlies are more likely to face stress. Family, children, bills, work... it's all stress. (Budva, f.)

They also drink to celebrate some success or some joy. (Pljevlja, f.)

Well, for example, Toma Zdravković drank out of pain. (Bar, m.)

Out of love for alcohol. (Bar, m.)

They drink because they run away from problems, from life. They do not have the strength to face life and that is the easiest thing for them. Everything else is an excuse. (Bar, m.)

Definitely the biggest reason is to run away from problems. (Podgorica, m.)

To prove themselves. Recent example - at a wedding I attended, grandfather and father of a bridegroom, hugged, sang, looked around. And I heard when they said: "You come to the wedding to get drunk so that when you enter the circle dance you don't know how to get out, otherwise you don't come". (Pljevlja, m.)

Out of grief, grief for someone's death for example. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Addiction, some people do not function without a certain dose of alcohol. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Out of habit, but also in order to escape from reality. They do not know how to solve problems in real life and they think that they will outgrow them by taking alcohol or other harmful substances. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Simply, elderly have a lot of problems. (Bar, f.)

Well, their life is monotonous, maybe, so they try to lift their spirit up. (Bar, f.)

Do men or women consume alcohol more? Why?

When asked whether alcohol is more consumed by men or women, young people mostly answered that men drink alcohol more. For men, it is more appropriate to drink alcohol when they go out. It's a sign that a man is masculine. Also, men are more allowed to consume alcohol. Related to that boys are more privileged by the society and parents. On the other hand, girls are more careful and responsible.

I think men consume more, because it's like some kind of embodiment of masculinity. It may be presented to them that way. It is way too stupid, yet it is simply like that. (Budva, m.)

To be honest, when a guy goes out, he won't order a juice to drink. He has to have something hard to drink, to show that he is masculine. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Usually when you see guys, who are 17-18 years old, drinking cola, then you see that they also have that character, that not everyone proves themselves through alcohol. (Herceg Novi, f.)

She will always be responsible and thus she gains some responsibility. She was not like that before. She would take a drink. But now when she started driving, she says to herself no, those are the limits and that's it. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Women are more aware of the dangers. (Podgorica, f.)

Well, in the Balkans, they will say bad things if they see a woman who is drunk and they will justify a man. We normalized it so much, and we shouldn't have. (Podgorica, f.)

Some young people believe that nowadays, women are drinking more and more and that they are equal to men in this respect. According to their understanding, when women drink too much, they relax and may lose control. Some of them believe that women often, want to prove themselves by drinking. Young men, especially from the northern region, believe that it is not appropriate for women to drink and that this deviates from the usual image that a woman holds in the society.

Worse than men. They find it harder to control themselves when they get drunk. They relax too much. (Bar, m.)

It's a kind of even now. Women started to drink more. (Berane, f.)

Men tolerate alcohol better than women, but now it is such a time that they certainly drink twice as much as men. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

In my opinion girls nowadays may want to drink more when they are in male company to prove themselves. In my opinion it is OK for males, but girls really... I don't think it's appropriate for them to drink. (Pljevlja, m.)

That all deviates from his image of a woman. (Pljevlja, m.)

What would be moderate and what excessive alcohol consumption?

Do young people take into account how much they consume alcohol and do they know what is moderate and what is excessive alcohol consumption? Most of them believe that moderate drinking aims to relax them. They drink moderately usually on some occasions.

We drink moderately until we relax. We sip, we have healthy thoughts, we know what we are doing and our actions are normal. (Nikšić, f.)

Well, honestly, it is moderate as long as you feel that you like it, and until it starts to bring you down. I know from my own experience, I feel something in my body, it puts me down completely, my eyes fall all of a sudden and it is an immediate sign for me to stop. (Herceg Novi, f.)

The general impression is that excessive drinking is not a phenomenon unknown to young people. Excessive drinking is recognized as drinking that involves daily consumption of alcohol or consumption in large quantities, which as a final result has intoxication of the person. All young people understand that it has bad consequences, dizziness, vomiting. They believe that young people should stop drinking as soon as they feel nauseous, powerless, when they cannot control themselves or when they start doing nonsense.

Not being able to stand on your feet is excessive. (Herceg Novi, f.)

It is moderate as long as it can be controlled, and excessive when you lose consciousness. (Pljevlja, m.)

When you drink too much and start doing some nonsense, then you need to drink a little less. (Herceg Novi, f.)

When a person drinks a crate of beer a day. A glass, or two is normal when you go out. (Berane, f.)

Looking into our experience, moderate drinking is when you go out and drink one drink with a small percentage of alcohol and do not get drunk. (Podgorica, f.)

Binge drinking puts us in a state, in which we don't know where we are. (Podgorica, f.)

Excessive is the daily alcohol consumption and moderate when you drink only on special occasions or within normal limits. (Budva, f.)

Losing control over our body. (Pljevlja, f.)

When someone doesn't need an occasion to drink, they just get up and drink for no reason all day. (Pljevlja, f.)

It is excessive to drink every day, even one beer a day. I know from personal experience. Out of boredom we would go out to drink every day. That's awful. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

What is alcoholism?

Young people have shown that they are aware of the definition of alcoholism. This phenomenon is seen as a type of addiction that often comes from the inability to control oneself and function without the use of alcohol. Alcoholics are people who see their way out of a certain situation through alcohol consumption. They note that many young people mistakenly label some of their conditions as depression, which is why they turn to drinking, believing that they are happy only if they drink. Such a habit can lead them to alcohol addiction.

Well, maybe people who can't control themselves, people who see a hopeless situation and try to solve that situation with alcohol. (Budva, m.)

Well, addiction, a kind of addiction, when someone can't stand a day without alcohol. Both mental and physical dependence. (Bar, m.)

That is when someone just feels the need to be in the state of drunkenness. And he has that need every day and can't live without it. (Herceg Novi, f.)

When you drink constantly, you are addicted. (Bijelo Polje, f.)

When they convince themselves that they can't do without alcohol, that it is an integral part of their lives. (Podgorica, f.)

Unfortunately, there are a lot of young generations that I know, precisely some friends who told me: "I can no longer be happy if I don't get drunk". (Podgorica, f.)

Everyone says I'm depressed. They actually see it on social networks, and then they think to themselves: "Drinking makes me happy". (Berane, m.)

The problem is that in those conditions, in which we call ourselves depressed, we diminish the importance of real depression and people who really have a problem with this disease. There is a huge number of those who just think to themselves that they are not happy and that they do not experience a feeling of happiness. (Nikšić, m.)

When they consume it every day, when it becomes an obsession, and when someone is addicted both mentally and physically. (Budva, f.)

Reasons behind alcohol consumption

Socio-cultural factors

Montenegro is a specific area when it comes to alcohol consumption. The use of alcohol in Montenegrin society is a part of the historical and cultural heritage i.e. it is largely encouraged by tradition and customs. All celebrations such as weddings, birthdays, the birth of a child, holidays and all celebratory occasions, traditionally cannot pass without alcohol consumption. This is largely noticed and confirmed by young people who believe that this is a normality for Montenegrin society that we do not bother with at all. The practice of drinking is very emphasized, so it is a tradition to try alcohol in childhood or puberty, especially for male children. In the daily life of Montenegrin society, we have different situations where alcohol is used. The use of rakia¹⁵ is especially related to health. Often the morning starts with a glass of rakia for health reasons, rakia goes with a coffee, rakia is good to clear the throat, clean the wound, reduce the temperature and similar.

Male children, when they are younger, are offered a drink by their parents as a joke ... so when they turn 16, 17 it has already become a routine. (Nikšić, f.)

Well, it is known that boys are given alcohol when they are very young, and then they praise them: "Well done, dad's son". (Pljevlja, f.)

It is our tradition to drink rakia, to have coffee with rakia, and that has been passed down from generation to generation. More among men. But there is always that story. That's why we joke that rakia is healthy. It's part of our tradition and we don't bother about it too much. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Regarding health, it is supposedly healthy to drink rakia in the morning to purify yourself. Older people, when they have a toothache, they gargle the rakia, when we were little, our mother would soak our socks in rakia because it takes out the temperature, if we scrape ourselves - rakia. (Herceg Novi, f.)

That the use of rakia has a great socio-cultural significance in the lives of people in our region is shown by the custom of giving rakia in all festive situations. One brings rakia/bottle of liquor when going to *slava*¹⁶, when congratulating on the birth of a baby, wedding. Thus, rakia is a part of not only everyday life but a part of our traditional rituals. Toasts at all these events inevitably take place with some kind of alcoholic beverage. Young

15) A strong alcoholic drink that is made from various types of fruit, mostly plums.

16) Celebration of family saint patron's day.

people notice very well that consuming rakia on these occasions is very desirable, while its refusal is not viewed favorably. Its use is even encouraged by all participants in festive occasions. Some young people mention that they tried alcohol for the first time at ceremonies and festivities. For this reason, they believe that the age at which the first alcohol consumption in Montenegro occurs, is much lower than in other parts of the world. However, if someone exaggerates its use, might be condemned.

Well, Montenegrins are generally specific people, strapping and similar, they always drank. I tried alcohol for the first time at slava, they toasted with rakia and said: " For health". That is somehow normal for us. I think it has a lot to do with our religion as well. We receive communion with alcohol, i.e. wine and bread. (Podgorica, f.)

Majority of us perceives alcohol as a prerequisite for having fun, as if it is the only way for us to relax. Whereas, when someone is in a critical condition and needs to be taken home, everyone turns their head and no one wants to deal with it. (Herceg Novi, f.)

It is unhealthy. I recently read on social media that in America they taste alcohol for the first time, at the age of 21. And we are alcoholics at fourteen already. It is funny to us but it shouldn't be. (Podgorica, f.)

Well, in our country people drink alcohol non-stop, they drink when someone is born as well as when someone dies. (Pljevlja, m.)

Mostly customs. For example, in the past, when there was a bigger celebration, majority of people were present at it, 90 percent of them intoxicated catastrophically. And then it continues for generations. Whenever someone goes out: "I have to get drunk, I have to!", as if it's a must. (Podgorica, f.)

Wherever you turn, there is a good reason for our people to drink. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

There is no celebration without alcohol, and even people will not attend it if there is no alcohol. (Bijelo Polje, f.)

It's all about tradition. Grandfather hands over something to his son and grandson, at least some drink. I have at home a bottle of rakia that my grandfather left for my marriage. The same goes for my brother, for his marriage. (Pljevlja, f.)

Well I tried alcohol, rakia, when I was at slava with my mother. (Bijelo Polje, f.)

There is a saying by old people, that there is no celebration of a birth of a male child if someone does not “pass out”. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

It is simply an excuse to drink. (Podgorica, m.)

When it comes to celebrations, young people mention one of the recently introduced occasions, and that is celebration of the 18th birthday. Celebration of the legal adulthood is a new custom that encourages alcohol consumption among young people. However, young people think that people from this area feel more relaxing and merrier thanks to all these celebrations, which is not the case with some societies that are much more rigid in this regard.

Birthdays, especially the eighteenth, have now become the turning point for us to get drunk - alcohol fest. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Eighteenth birthday always includes drinking, only to brag that they drank. (Pljevlja, f.)

I like that about our people, who know how to party and have fun, and that we haven't lost those customs, such as the English, for example. They don't have a lot of customs nowadays. They don't know how to have fun like we do. We also have slava, we have some customs that somehow connect the family, even if we drink - we are joyful and happy that we have family. We can always gather family for a celebration. (Herceg Novi, f.)

It is interesting that young people mentioned that the consumption of alcohol in our region is supported by its frequent mentions in the literature.

In our folk literature there is some example. (Podgorica, m.)

Let me just say that Marko Kraljević also treated Šarac with some wine. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Also, young people mentioned a common custom in Montenegro, which is making of rakia and wine at home. Young people believe that these customs, which are traditionally present in our country, in a certain way encourage and maintain the frequent use of alcohol.

You mentioned making of rakia. My grandfather never participated, but he had cauldron for rakia. And when that ceremony starts, they gather to taste the rakia, to see if it's good. When they relaxed a little, it was, for me, a really pleasant atmosphere. At that time, I didn't drink with them. It's interesting how these people behave: “Come on, drink, don't be a...” I do not want to curse... but I think you know what I mean. “Relax a bit”, but as soon as someone starts to develop an addiction or starts to drink excessively, then it is a taboo: “Leave him alone, let him be”. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Well, just the fact that it is our tradition to make rakia at home, that tells us everything. It has really been done since ancient times. It is a symbol of some sort of fun and joy, they look at you as a merryman. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Some young people believe that it is completely justified to consume alcohol on festive occasions and they would not abolish such traditional customs at celebrations, weddings and funerals. As they say, it's a custom. Those who believe that alcohol consumption is not necessary on these occasions, however, give in, considering the importance of tradition and habit. However, some young people believe that religion should be respected when it does not allow the consumption of alcohol, but that in our environment these rules are often violated.

You should make a toast in certain quantities, to make a toast for the soul. I would not abolish it, tradition is tradition. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I think it is unnecessary, but it is a custom and we are all used to it - for celebrations, for Christmas Eve and morning, New Year, birth. (Budva, m.)

It is a normal thing in accordance with our tradition. It simply remained written down and it is transmitted and practiced today. The old people always drank rakia. I don't justify that and I don't like it, but it's a tradition. (Pljavlja, m.)

Do you think that alcohol consumption in Montenegro is considered as a part men maturation process?

Observing the tradition of Montenegrin society, one of the often emphasized views when it comes to reaching maturity, especially in men, is that alcohol consumption makes young men a grown men, i.e. that drinking is part of their maturation process. Is such an understanding still present in our society and has anything changed in relation to that? Conversations with young people, both boys and girls, showed that such an attitude is often present among the elderly, but that they are not sure that alcohol consumption turns young men into mature adults. After consuming alcohol, or getting drunk for the first time, they get the support of adults, but nothing changes in terms of maturity, according to the majority of male participants. Consumption of alcohol may enhance the feeling of courage and boldness, but in their opinion, it is the tradition that is responsible for the survival of such an opinion.

It is in accordance with the tradition. (Nikšić, m.)

Do you feel more like an adult when you try alcohol? Not really. (Nikšić, m.)

No. For some it is, for me it is not. (Budva, m.)

It's perceived as if it is. When I got drunk for the first time, everyone was like: "You're big now." That's how it is perceived. (Budva, m.)

If we felt that way, we would all drink. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

My father and grandfather never consumed alcohol, but my uncles are big drunks and they kept saying: "Bravo!" to me, even when I was a child. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I'm not a man if I haven't at least tried it. That's the way it is perceived. And already those, older four years than us, are telling us that. (Bar, m.)

I don't drink to look more mature, but because it is fun and I like to drink (Bar, m.)

Some young men believe that young people have a false sense of maturity when they drink, and those are often problematic young men.

Depends on the perspective. As someone who doesn't drink, I see how guys behave while drinking. They are trying to behave like some older people, and those older people are actually problematic, because they are not a good role model for us. (Bar, m.)

Young women think very similarly. From their perspective, consumption of alcohol in no way indicates maturity, but quite the opposite. Those who prove their maturity through that, essentially show that they are not really mature. In their opinion, alcohol consumption can never be a sign of maturity. Drinking alone can be a sign that someone is showing off, but not necessarily a sign of maturity. Maturity is achieved in a different way and depends on what the individual is doing and what he/she represents by that.

In my opinion, if they think that they are showing their maturity by drinking alcohol, it immediately shows that they are immature. (Herceg Novi, f.)

I think that those, who think that will become mature through drinking, are actually more immature. It is very immature behavior. (Bar, f.)

They think that they look like adults. Our peers who behave like that don't really look like adults at all, but like jerks, and they seem not to understand that. (Pljevlja, f.)

The thing that I dislike the most, related to that, is that most of

them, when they get drunk, want to prove themselves by starting a fight. I don't know how other girls feel about it, but for me it's unpleasant. **(Herceg Novi, f.)**

Speaking of brothers, I wanted to say that my brother also likes to drink. Since he works out, he likes it in a certain amount and I don't think it's the same for everyone. I don't think that maturation happens by drinking but in a much different way, depending on what he is doing or whether he has some hobby, or something else. **(Bar, f.)**

They may look at it in that way, but I have an example of my brother. He never tried alcohol. He is 23 years old. He was the best man at the wedding and he had to make a toast and he made it but did not drink. This is a clear example that it is not a part of maturation. **(Bijelo Polje, f.)**

Peers as a factor

Peer pressure is often being mentioned as one of the important factors for the beginning of alcohol consumption as well as for its continuous use. Given that peers play a major role in the social life of young people, the question arises as to the role of peers in alcohol consumption, whether young people choose when to consume alcohol, do they do it under pressure from others in order not to differ from them, not to stand out from the group and do they pressure others as well. The general impression given by young people is that the peer pressure is constantly present. Some of them surrender to that pressure, in order not to feel bad in the company of friends that drink, so that they would not be bored, that they would relax together with friends, or because they are afraid of what friends might think of them if they do not drink. Peer pressure is the highest in the northern part of Montenegro.

*I get bored unless I drink at least one beer. **(Nikšić, m.)***

*If I were the only one among friends who wouldn't drink, then I would feel uptight and they would all be relaxed. **(Podgorica, f.)***

*And then the one who did not drink feels less important among friends. **(Herceg Novi, f.)***

*There are many of them who are afraid of what the public will say if they get drunk. **(Bijelo Polje, m.)***

*This is quite a problem with our society - today you are not IN if you do not drink. **(Bijelo Polje, m.)***

I was pressured a lot of times, I just leave, I don't stay, I am outraged. It bothers me. We went out for a walk and not to get drunk. When friends

take a beer and I take a juice or an energy drink, they immediately say that I am a coward. If we refuse to drink, they curse, they start with name-calling, then I just walk out the door. **(Berane, m.)**

They pressure you. When you say you don't want to drink, they become even more "pushy", so they say: "If you drink one, I'll give you this and that", they bet. **(Berane, m.)**

There is, but if I don't feel like drinking, I don't do that. **(Nikšić, f.)**

They tell me that the one who toasts with juice, makes female children (laughs). **(Nikšić, f.)**

The most join in. When everyone can, so can I. It can become boring when everyone drinks, and you are the only one that doesn't. **(Berane, f.)**

Well, honestly, I don't drink, but when I am with friends they persuade me a lot. I'm not giving in. **(Bar, f.)**

Do they themselves put a pressure on others to consume alcohol? One part of young people, predominantly young men, admits that they put pressure on their peers to drink. Some realized they had made a mistake and apologized, while others have never done that nor they feel there is a need for it.

There is no pressure. We are the ones who put pressure. We tell them to drink. You have to, you came here willingly. I will not drink alone. **(Nikšić, m.)**

I pressured my friend - we'll drink only one drink. He got angry that night. Almost all of us drank. I'm positive when I drink and then I joke with him. He didn't want to talk to me anymore so I apologized to him the next day. **(Berane, m.)**

I never forced anyone to drink, especially not female friends. **(Bijelo Polje, m.)**

I offer a drink to my friend, if he is not up for it, I don't insist. **(Berane, m.)**

I never persuaded anyone. I don't even need to ask. I'm just silent. If he doesn't feel like drinking, leave it to that. There is no need for me to harass you, if you want to drink, there is a bottle in front of you. **(Podgorica, m.)**

My friend has to drink if she goes out with me. **(Nikšić, f.)**

If there are several of us then they help, if I am alone then I persuade. **(Berane, f.)**

A number of young people successfully resist persuasions from peers to consume alcohol when they do not want to. They believe that it is not

difficult when you have your own attitude and that a person should judge for themselves whether they want to consume alcohol or not with certain friends or in a certain moment. They state that they value those who have a clear standpoint and determination not to drink more than those who surrender to that pressure. The decisions of others on that issue should be respected, but they should also respect yours. Many of them decided for themselves when to try alcohol or get drunk for the first time. They considered themselves adult enough and that was a sufficient motive.

Yes, I don't want to go there where narghile is being used. I have no need for that. I just don't want to consume it in my life. But it is important for some, they want to stand out among friends and they think they are cool, but in fact they are not. (Budva, m.)

Not for me because I am not interested in other people's opinion and I would rather lead a healthy lifestyle as an athlete. First of all, alcohol has a bad effect on muscles. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

It's easy for me, I just say no. (Budva, m.)

I just wanted it. That was my wish, kind of. I just thought I was old enough to try it and that's it, it happened. (Budva, m.)

They try to persuade but it doesn't concern me. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I have a lot of older friends, who take a booze and I take a peach juice, but they never tell me to drink alcohol. They know I have the character to say no. Sometimes I get drunk, and then it takes me a week to recover. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I will always rather accept someone who says he will not drink, than someone who will adjust themselves for the sake of someone else. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I have pictures with everyone drinking and I have a juice. (Podgorica, m.)

Well sometimes yes, but it is not an obstacle for me to stick to my decision. As I have that fixed attitude, I don't think it can be changed by any persuasion. (Podgorica, m.)

Here we need to have self-awareness of what we want and what we don't want. For example, when my friend and I go somewhere, we agree on whether we want to drink or not. If we like it, we order more, but we are never forced to do something. (Herceg Novi, f.)

That's why you need to be, so to say, normal and mature enough, so that it doesn't hurt you to be different, to stand out, but to even be proud of it. (Herceg Novi, f.)

I feel special, only I drink Fanta (laughs). (Berane, f.)

Parents as a factor

The attitude of young people towards alcohol and its consumption is greatly influenced by the attitude of their family towards alcohol. How parents look at their children's alcohol consumption, what example they and the whole family set for them and what they advise them. All young people agree that their parents are very protective of them and that they are very worried when it comes to alcohol consumption. They are afraid of their children's behavior under the influence of alcohol and not to overdo it. Before going out, they give advice on how to behave, whether to drink and how much. Young people mostly say that parents are generally against alcohol consumption, especially when it comes to girls.

They do not forbid in certain quantities. (Nikšić, f.)

Parents are very protective, they don't allow and warn us about alcohol, even this thing about opening bottles, so that someone would not put drugs in it. (Podgorica, m.)

They say you don't need that, you're an athlete. (Nikšić, m.)

My mother tells me I'm an alcoholic if I drink two beers when I go out. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I am always being lectured when I go out, it's always like: "Don't you dare to drink alcohol, just don't". I think they have so much trust in me, that they know that I won't cause some chaos, but they are more afraid of someone putting something in my drink. I am a female after all. No matter how much these standards are imposed, I am somehow aware that I am a girl and I need, somehow, to behave a bit more seriously than guys. (Herceg Novi, f.)

My family knows and they give lectures every time. (Berane, f.)

My father is a policeman and he often warns me. They are especially protective because I am a girl. (Bijelo Polje, f.)

Well, my parents do not allow me to drink and I often do it secretly. But they don't drink. My sister drinks. (Pljevlja, f.)

Parents generally try to prevent that in some way, they try to talk to us so that we don't do stupid things. (Pljevlja, f.)

Most young people have built a relationship of trust with their parents when it comes to alcohol consumption and are very satisfied about it. This means that they are free to talk to their parents about consuming alcohol while going out, but sometimes it still happens that they do not tell they drank, so that their parents would not worry. The most common advice is to avoid alcohol, but if they have to consume it, do not overdo it, i.e. drink in

quantities that will not lead to intoxication. Certainly, some young people believe that they should behave as they want, while others try to obey their parents so as not to lose their trust. They would feel very bad in that case.

If I go out with friends, they say: "Don't drink, don't fool around", but I never listen to them, I do what I want. (Nikšić, f.)

It is not that we do not tell them out of distrust, but not to worry them. (Nikšić, f.)

Before they would say: "If by any chance I hear you drank..."; and now: "Please, take something in an unopened bottle or can, so that no one could put something in your drink. You should know to put the limit. Do not, by any chance, ride with someone". (Herceg Novi, f.)

I don't think that my mom would make a problem if I took one glass of something like bamboo (mix of wine and cola) or something. But if I would come to her drunk, I believe she would think less of me. I do not know why. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Losing confidence is worse than any punishment. (Herceg Novi, f.)

That is very important. The relationship of trust and understanding, as well as talking to children. (Bijelo Polje, f.)

My family also has an open communication with me and they always say: "Watch what you are doing". It is important that they know with whom I am. They always tell me that, if I want to drink or try alcohol, I should tell them on time, so that they would be ready, just in case. (Budva, f.)

My family knows, they notice when I drink, they just worry about me starting to drink a lot. I've been drunk maybe twice this year. When they see me cheerful they know what's behind that. (Berane, m.)

Before I go out, I call my parents and then they advise: "Be careful of drink spiking, be careful what you do". (Berane, m.)

Parents are role models for their children. If parents drink, then children are more likely to drink as well. Most young people stated that their parents drink in normal amounts, mostly only on certain occasions, i.e. at celebrations, when they are with friends or with a meal. However, young people cite cases where a parent or a family member is a bad role model for their children. In that case, that parent or family member embodies the bad effects of alcohol and can be a reason and a motive behind child's reluctance or avoidance of consuming alcohol. Some young people do not drink for religious reasons.

Well, my mother doesn't prohibit, but she constantly warns me when I go somewhere to be careful. She doesn't drink, only sometimes

when there are celebrations. By the way, she got divorced because of alcohol, when I was little, because my father was a notorious alcoholic. So, we are taught by this experience to be extremely careful with alcohol. Just last night when I got home, I told her I had a little drink and she said it doesn't matter as long as it doesn't happen often. **(Bar, f.)**

I think talking to parents is very important. We had family problems with that, dad ran away from some problems and drank constantly for a while. And he kept arguing with our mother. Then my brother and I decided that we would never have anything to do with alcohol because it leads neither forward nor backward, but keeps you stuck. We talked to our dad and so it happened, he heard what we were saying, he listened and stopped. He doesn't drink anymore, he even sometimes goes to sport events with us. **(Bar, f.)**

Well, they disgusted alcohol to me at my early age, which was their goal, not to become like that. Not to try anything, not even alcohol, and they succeeded. And they are like that. **(Budva, m.)**

Mother never drank even though she lived in an environment where everyone drinks, smokes. My father never got drunk (at least that's what he told me). He had an example of his father who even slept on a bench in the park. He stopped drinking and turned to faith. He doesn't drink anymore. While he was playing in a band, because he was a musician, he used to drink excessively and buy drinks for others ... that's all connected with the surroundings. **(Bijelo Polje, m.)**

We first learn to drink and then talk, it is in our family tradition. I know many relatives who died of rakia. My grandfather destroyed his liver, he started drinking out of grief for his wife. Mom doesn't drink, sometimes one liqueur and that's it. Dad, the same. **(Bijelo Polje, m.)**

My father used to consume it, but he stopped because he realized that was not a good thing to do. He works in the countryside. He doesn't need it because a man who works all the time can't get drunk, and he stopped drinking. And now he doesn't consume anything at all. He wouldn't be angry if I started consuming it, although he keeps telling me that it's not good at all and to be careful who I go out with. **(Pljevlja, m.)**

Faith forbids us to drink. **(Pljevlja, m.)**

Availability of drinks as a factor

An important factor that contributes to the wider consumption of alcohol among young people is the availability of drinks in stores, newsagents, gas stations and similar. Despite the prohibition on alcohol selling to those under

the age of 18, young people believe that this rule is not regularly respected and that all alcoholic beverages are available to them, regardless of being minors. Also, in all bars, cafes and restaurants, young people are served alcoholic beverages without any problems if they ask for it, and there are rare cases when they are asked for an ID card in order to check their age. On the other hand, some young people think that even if the measures regarding the purchase of alcohol are stricter, they would manage to get it somehow. They are of an opinion that even the adults do not take this into account, and that they often send their children to buy alcoholic beverages for them. Therefore, most of them think that it is not good, and that the state should control more, and impose penalties more often for violating those rules.

In one bar, minors were not allowed to drink. (Nikšić, f.)

In our place at some stores, they don't allow it without an ID, so they are waiting for someone to come and to buy it for them. (Herceg Novi, f.)

It depends on the store. In some stores they give it to anyone, and in some they ask for an ID, and then you have to wait for someone older. Especially starting from this year. The same goes for newsagents. (Herceg Novi, f.)

We are all allowed to buy anywhere and I think that is wrong, especially when parents send their children to buy them these things. (Podgorica, f.)

Although it is prohibited by the law to those under the age of 18 very often we can take it in stores without any check. (Bar, f.)

If the law was finally enforced, it would not happen. (Podgorica, f.)

And to deny the owner a profit. As a matter of fact it is all the fault of the state that does not conduct control and does not impose penalties. (Podgorica, f.)

Who wants it, will always get it somehow. (Budva, m.)

If it wasn't available, most of them would get it somehow. (Berane, f.)

I think that would cause a countereffect, but the current situation, in which we can all buy alcohol and cigarettes everywhere and at any time, is simply not good at all. Nobody asks us about age, alcohol is served everywhere in cafes. (Bar, m.)

The law is strict and not respected. It is written everywhere that it is forbidden to sell cigars and alcohol to people under the age of 18, and no one respects that. I can buy it anywhere. All of us, on every corner. (Pljevlja, m.)

*We have victims of false morals and that role is assigned to minors.
(Bijelo Polje, f.)*

The media and media content play an important role in alcohol consumption among young people. Movies, TV shows, music videos, commercials, are full of scenes with alcoholic beverages that encourage young people to drink alcohol more intensively. If it is about young famous people, the effect of imitating idols is greater. Also, thanks to advertisements, young people are introduced to the types of drinks that exist. Since young people often use social networks, they note that they are full of influencers who use alcohol, as well as other different examples and challenges related to alcohol consumption. According to them, such content influences young people aged 13 and 14, who are exposed to it, to also try alcohol. A number of young people believe that regardless of the existence of advertisements that encourage alcohol consumption, young people would certainly consume it because of its impact on the positive atmosphere while socializing.

The media, social networks really contribute. There are reality programs on TV where alcohol is consumed. There are also advertisements for spritzer, wine... There is something like, if you buy juice you get a beer for free. (Nikšić, f.)

There are stories with alcohol on Instagram all the time. (Nikšić, f.)

*They can't make an impact on us as much as on those aged 13-14.
(Nikšić, f.)*

I think that social networks are the most influential because young people are competing who will post what on TikTok or Instagram, from which location and what kind of photos they will take. Like, they go to Verige and take a picture with some alcohol in their hand. Then immediately someone else has to beat that or show that he can do the same. (Bar, f.)

I think that the reason for alcohol is absolutely not advertising, but that positive atmosphere impacts the consumption. (Bar, f.)

I would never have tried Somersby if I hadn't seen it on the commercial. I wouldn't have known it existed. I watched on Instagram this summer influencers who had a party at a pool and all our influencers advertised some drink on the net. (Podgorica, f.)

*After movie Toma, all of my friends went to a tavern to drink.
(Podgorica, f.)*

If there are celebrities who have a lot of influence on society, it affects a lot. (Bijelo Polje, f.)

I think they encourage. I mean, who hasn't tried it, and when they see the ad, they will say: "I shall try it". Like there are a lot of commercials that encourage people to try something. People want to see what it is, what it tastes like. (Budva, m.)

Alcohol consumption

Young people have previously given general reasons why they think people drink, but what do they think are the main reasons why young people drink? There are various reasons that they state and I can hardly single out one or several of them that would be the most important because it all depends on the situation in which they find themselves. They think that they drink because of their friend group, to show themselves, to be cool, to feel power, to have fun, to be in a better mood, to reduce fear, to escape from problems, because of break up, because of the influence of media, social networks, curiosity, boredom, loneliness, stress, family relationships, lack of self-confidence, due to grief over the loss of loved ones, out of spite and protest against authority, etc.

It's all about a lack of self-confidence. You want to be perceived as better among friends. (Podgorica, f.)

They have nothing to do. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Friends are, in my opinion, the main factor influencing the consumption. I don't think anyone would all of a sudden, consciously, come and say: "Everything is great for me, I should get drunk". (Bijelo Polje, f.)

When something is forbidden, then almost always people do the opposite. If a parent forbids it, we do the exact thing that is forbidden. And it can also be because of the problems. Like family problems, running away from them. (Bar, m.)

When something is forbidden to us, then we do it out of spite. (Podgorica, m.)

Limitless sadness. I have an acquaintance, his mother died last year. She had been ill for four years before that and he started drinking thinking it would help him. (Bijelo Polje, f.)

Today, young people drink because it's cool, because friend group makes them, because they want to be "top". (Budva, f.)

Maybe when someone is sad or when he wants to try to get over break up with a girlfriend. (Budva, f.)

Because they think they will be cool in front of girls. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

The main reason is to enjoy, and sometimes I drink, to get some sadness out of me and forget it. It becomes easier for me and it passes. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

They try to avoid the problem. Many of them drink because they are trying to go from real life to a parallel world, so that they are not present here, and they feel fine until they sober up. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Well, maybe because of failures in some other areas, e.g. in sports or something they do outside of school. (Bar, m.)

They think they will be more popular. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Most young people, regardless of gender, as far back as they can remember, tried alcohol for the first time as children, from the age of 5 or 6 onwards. The most common alcoholic beverages they tried were beer and rakia, and almost always the beverage was offered to them by someone from the family, most often a male member, father, grandfather, uncles. Mostly they didn't like the taste of alcohol. They later tried alcohol after their 13th birthday.

Second or third grade, in the village with godparents. We stole rakia. Taste was awful. (Nikšić, m.)

The first time I tried it as a kid. Someone gave me rakia and I didn't like it. The first time I liked taste of alcohol was when I was 13. My aunt offered me some liqueur and it was delicious. And I got drunk for the first time four days after my 15th birthday. (Herceg Novi, f.)

I was two years old, my dad was sitting in a café. There was a small glass and I thought it was water, I took it and drank it. (Herceg Novi, f.)

Grandfather or uncle, a sip of beer, 10 years old. (Podgorica, m.)

My grandfather, wine, when I was little. I don't remember how old I was. (Budva, f.)

Very small, dad and wine. (Podgorica, m.)

Well, unlike them, at the age of 15, beer. On my sister's birthday, my brother offered it to me. (Bar, m.)

Is drinking a need or a habit to you?

As we have seen, young people try alcohol quite early for the first time. At the age of 15 to 18 years, alcohol consumption, according to them, is slowly becoming a habit that makes life more beautiful. Now when they go out, they usually drink beer and rakia, and the girls order some sweet drinks, cocktails, and often juices. Sometimes a competitive spirit develops among them in terms of who will drink more, and such situations are more

common among men. Young people state that they always drink with friends and that many of their peers often mix drinks, but they do not stop there. They mix alcoholic drinks with weed, medicines or psychoactive substances, which can sometimes have tragic consequences.

Well, it's more of a habit because we don't know what to drink. Everything becomes boring quickly. (Bar, f.)

Simply, to brighten my life. Sometimes you want to enjoy the moment. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

The only thing I mix is beer and tequila. We drank mead and beer for a while. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Starting from weed and all the way up. Weed plus beer I guess. They compete, especially men. (Bar, f.)

I mixed weed and alcohol a couple of times to get a better effect. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

I know they mix Bromazepam with alcohol. Somehow it intensifies the effect. (Bijelo Polje, m.)

Yes, everything is being mixed. Not to mention how expensive it all is in clubs, cocktails are 20 euros. (Budva, f.)

They mix, of course. I was not directly present in similar situations, but I was told and I can notice that when I go out. (Bar, f.)

One acquaintance mixed some psychoactive substances with alcohol and almost died because he was driving in that state. (Bar, f.)

Young people are very aware that excessive alcohol consumption is not good for the individuals or their surroundings. They notice frequent family quarrels caused by excessive alcohol consumption. They also recognize examples in their surroundings when a person's drunken state begins to affect the psyche and causes aggressive behavior towards family members, disrupting family and friendly relationships. They notice that due to drunkenness, people sometimes lose control of themselves and are not aware of their actions. They also mention examples of young people who are increasingly becoming addicted to alcohol and demonstrating criminal behavior.

Well, one guy, who drinks regularly, came home drunk and mistreated his mother. And then the police got involved, they put him in a juvenile home. He was under 18, but he was under the influence of something. (Pljevlja, m.)

There is one family - the son sleeps with an ax under the terrace. It's like he's keeping something from someone, and he's constantly drunk. He is not very old, he is about 22 years old, but they say he

went crazy from alcohol. Everyone is afraid of him. In fact, he came back from prison like that and I don't know what he was in prison for. **(Pljevlja, m.)**

There are examples where children borrow money to drink, drink on credit, and then parents go to pay for it. Or they sell something from home, like drug addicts. It is possible that they went down that road as well. **(Pljevlja, m.)**

One friend of mine literally drank a glass of rakia and fell to the floor. And the other drank Somersby and Smirnoff Ice at the celebration of the end of elementary school. He drank three drinks and started diving his head in the sand like a flamingo, while others started to swim in their clothes. **(Budva, f.)**

Violations of public order and peace, traffic violations. **(Podgorica, f.)**

My mother told me about an older brother who kidnapped his younger brother and did not want to bring him back until his parents gave him money for alcohol. **(Podgorica, f.)**

Steals money to be able to drink. **(Podgorica, m.)**

Marriages are falling apart because of that. **(Berane, m.)**

Mentally he changes completely when he starts drinking, he changes his attitude and all. **(Berane, m.)**

Well, what I noticed the most is the loss of a friendly relationship with parents, because parents really try to be friends with their children and to be open to them. And when that relationship is shaken, it's worse than losing any friend. That can happen due to alcohol. Especially with boys who are often more aggressive when they drink than girls and are prone to hurting their mother or father. **(Herceg Novi, f.)**

Well, recently one of my friends got drunk, and his father found out that. Their relationship is severely disrupted, he is now even punished. **(Herceg Novi, f.)**

In the end, when they thought carefully about all said, when they saw the many consequences that alcohol consumption can produce, everyone agreed that frequent alcohol consumption can lead them personally and their friends to alcoholism.

This generation, a lot of them will turn out to be serious alcoholics. **(Herceg Novi, f.)**

It seems to me that we are very much in it. **(Herceg Novi, f.)**

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the focus group discussion, we asked young people what they think that needs to be done to reduce alcohol consumption among youth in Montenegro. We have selected some of the recommendations:

1. *This is not a bad time, this is us being bad! Lack of focus of the population on serious problems that can most often lead to fatal consequences from which there is no return. It's not too late, we still have time. Pay attention because tomorrow may be someone who means a lot to you.*
2. *I think we need to reduce alcohol production. Also, advertising of alcoholic products should be reduced. Human responsibility comes first.*
3. *More education on this topic, promoting healthy lifestyles among young people. When it comes to alcohol selling, I think that all this is enough, because if someone wants to get it, they will get it. Some things need to be changed radically, such as culture and customs. As long as the environment supports it, all efforts are in vain.*
4. *I think it's best to "take the money out of people's pockets". Anyway, for us in the Balkans, money sometimes means more than life. I think a money fine is the most effective solution.*
5. *Raising awareness among minors that alcohol is harmful to their health and body development. Inspection of hospitality facilities to check whether minors consume alcohol. Money fines for those under 18.*
6. *Reducing promotion of alcohol in the media. Parents' approach to children in explaining the problem of alcoholism.*
7. *I honestly think that in order to reduce alcohol consumption among young people in Montenegro, measures should be more severe, such as limiting alcohol consumption for people under the age of 21, as well as to prohibit alcohol intoxication.*
8. *Work should be done to change the image that alcohol is "cool" and that someone should prove themselves to friends by consuming alcohol. More propaganda is needed about the disadvantages of alcohol, the consequences of alcohol/alcoholism on the individual and his/her environment.*
9. *They should be fined in order to stop drinking. Also, people who are addicted should go to rehab.*

10. *Primarily, tightening measures in markets and clubs, parents talking to children about the importance of safety during celebrations (alcohol consumption) and the very reasons for drinking (dealing with problems).*
11. *To make alcohol illegal.*
12. *Awareness raising, more workshops such as this one, legal restrictions.*
13. *I think children need to talk to their parents as much as possible and be aware of what they are doing.*
14. *Advising young people, more surveys, presentations at school, adults to pay more attention as well.*
15. *To introduce workshops on alcohol and its shortcomings in schools. Also, short advertisements on this topic should be placed on TV.*
16. *Reduce accessibility of alcohol, less emphasis on customs, greater accessibility of pedagogues and institutions to which young people could turn for help. This would have to grant them security.*
17. *There is not much influence, but I think society's view of it should change.*
18. *Perhaps hold more recreational activities to discuss the dangers of alcohol.*
19. *We need to hang out more with people who don't drink.*
20. *Parents to talk openly with children about this so that children do not feel fear.*
21. *Talk to them more often about this topic and help them understand that alcohol is not a normal occurrence in society.*
22. *Shift the focus of young people from alcohol to some more valuable things.*
23. *I think they should take stricter measures, to check cafes or bars. The state should also follow the regulations that have been set.*
24. *You need to raise the age limit that allows you to buy it. Also, I think that greater control over the purchase of alcohol should be introduced, that is, it should not be given to minors.*
25. *Consumption of alcohol among young people is more common due to lack of attention, the influence of society.*
26. *Greater communication with parents and building one's own attitude.*

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis of the results of focus groups conversations with youth showed how young people perceive alcohol consumption from their own point of view, how much they recognize the dangers of consuming this substance for their generation and how they personally, as well as their friends treat it. On the other hand, the analysis of interviews, with interlocutors who are experts in their profession, which is directly or indirectly related to the problem of alcoholism or youth work, as well as those who have direct or indirect experience related to alcoholism and engaging with youth, will provide a deeper insight in the issue of alcohol consumption among young people and point out some possible solutions and constructive proposals for a more successful approach to this problem, which is in the interest of society as a whole.

The interlocutors in this part of the research were members of state and health institutions, members of NGOs, school teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, parents and their representatives, youth representatives and treated alcoholics. Almost all participants have higher education. The composition of the interlocutors indicates that these are people who are quite competent to discuss the topic of alcohol consumption among young people. A large number of interlocutors, who are experts, are directly involved in work with young people who are addicted to alcohol, have extensive experience in projects involving young people through activities such as workshops, campaigns and similar, and are dealing with different youth issues. Parents and teachers are connected to young people from their primary experience, so they are familiar with all developmental stages and temptations that adolescents go through. All of them have a very analytical approach to the problem of early alcohol consumption in our society and alcohol consumption among young people and in general, are familiar with all its dangers, mostly recognize types of alcoholism, and have fairly clear reflections on ways and mechanisms that encourage, support and stimulate early alcohol consumption.

The greatest emphasis in the conversation was given to measures to prevent early alcohol use among young people, where we wanted to hear the opinion of the interlocutors on what would be the best approach for young people to learn about all the harmful effects of alcohol use and identify conditions that encourage widespread alcohol use in our society, such as the media, non-compliance with legal restrictions, low price of alcoholic beverages, illegal production of alcoholic beverages. Also, our

aim was to hear what they think about how families, schools and society in general can contribute to reducing alcohol consumption among young people, and to give certain suggestions and recommendations in that direction. The contribution of our interlocutors will be presented through the following thematic units.

Education of young people is often taken as a measure to prevent alcohol consumption among young people. What should youth education include?

All the interlocutors showed overall agreement that the best measure for the prevention of alcohol consumption among young people is education. The most common opinion is that education starts in primary school, but the seriousness of the consequences, as well as the socio-cultural characteristics of our environment, lead some of the interlocutors to the idea that education could start even earlier. Prevention of alcohol use should not start in adolescence, but much earlier, i.e. from the youngest days, where, of course, parents have the most important role. Therefore, primary education should start in the family, from parents whose role is multiple, and it primarily consists in pointing out to their children the numerous harmful consequences of alcohol consumption.

Prevention should start in the family environment. Family is the first place where the child learns about the world and what is allowed and what is not. Parents should not drink in front of children or, if they drink, not to allow children to drink in those periodic gatherings. They should refer to alcohol as a problem, it should not be a taboo topic." (E)¹⁷

"These are phases within the family that need to be implemented and during which parents should talk to their children about the harmful effects of alcohol" (E)

The family in Montenegro is the first line of prevention, but also the environment where children make their first contact with alcohol. Montenegrin society strongly nurtures traditional customs in which the role of alcoholic beverages is not negligible at all. Alcohol consumption

17) Instead of the names of the interlocutors and their profession, only the letter of their role in the research was given: P – parent, representative of parents; Y – youth; E – experts; PPP – professors, pedagogues, and psychologists in educational institutions; NGO; J – journalists; YW – youth worker; TA – treated alcoholics.

is generally accepted in all important events of human life, and a child in Montenegrin society very early encounters alcohol consumption in his own family. The family is the first to set a bad example, treating it as a harmless substance. Quite frequent consumption of alcohol makes the child perceive alcohol as an integral part of family life and daily rituals, which can intrigue the child to even try it. Parents, therefore, should lead their children by a personal example.

70 percent of the so-called "first spirit" was drunk within the family. This fact and this information says a lot about how accepted alcohol is, and that it is generally accepted as a part of tradition, and then people simply perceive it in that way. However, the public, ignores the detail that alcohol is most often the first drug mentioned among adolescents or the first drug among people who seek help. (NGO)

Children learn by imitation. If they see that a parent drinks then they think that it is not a big deal and they will have the same need: "Why shouldn't I take a drink when I see dad drinking, grandpa drinking, uncle drinking or mother, aunt and so on". (E)

I strongly believe in leading by example. So, if you have alcohol at the table during lunch every day, and you explain to children that they should not drink and how harmful it is, then I do not believe that you will convince them. I believe in influencing some of our traditional parenting habits because I have seen many times a father giving a child alcohol. The child frowns and we all laugh. And we influence that it is perceived as a completely acceptable way of everyday life, of celebrations, of all sorts of things. (E)

On the other hand, I think that parents should be more involved because some researches in other areas have pointed out that parents have a great influence on young people today. When I say parents, I mean family and the environment in which children and young people grow up. (NGO)

Somehow it has become socially accepted today, to consume alcohol and children are increasingly having the opportunity to hear, not just at home, how drinking a few glasses is completely natural. (NGO)

One of the very constructive suggestions of the interlocutors, that would significantly help this process of education from an early age, would be the education of the parents themselves. Given that adults themselves are in an environment where there is a traditionally relaxed attitude towards the use of alcoholic beverages, it is necessary for parents themselves to understand

why early alcohol use is harmful for young people, that it can lead to alcoholism, which has often disastrous health and social consequences. Only when parents themselves understand the multiple detrimental effects of alcohol use, only then can they pass it on to their children adequately.

Family education - schools might organize various lectures and education for family members on the harmfulness of alcohol. This should be largely covered by the media. Then we can work on prevention with children in schools. (E)

Well, maybe educating parents, to teach them some things as well, so that they understand that alcohol is easily accessible and to start a conversation on this topic with children as soon as possible. To support them, to learn them to defend themselves from it, to learn to say no, if they don't want it. (PPP)

The interlocutors know that the topic of alcohol use and its consequences is discussed in primary school. However, the general impression is that, given high level of alcohol consumption among adolescents, the education conducted in schools does not give good results. One possible reason is that this topic is not approached in a systematic way. The method of education, if conducted by experts, must be adapted to children's age and presented in a way that is sufficiently understandable to children of a certain age. Other issues that the interlocutors cite as problematic are often the competencies of persons who conduct education in schools.

I have witnessed the situations in which persons entering the schools had no credibility. They have no experience to talk about this issue. We need to conduct strict selection, very strict control over the education that is offered to children. (NGO)

A successful form of education for children and young people should be such as to fully acquaint them with what alcohol is and what effects it causes in the body. Young people are often unaware that alcohol causes various damages to the nervous system. Nerve cells are the only cells that do not regenerate. With this in mind, children will better understand how much damage alcohol can do. Also, education should include issue of psychological consequences. For example, alcohol addicts can develop various psychiatric diagnoses, such as the so-called alcohol psychosis.

The interlocutors note that the school introduces children and young people to the dangers of alcohol use through various educational programs and works on the prevention of alcohol use. In the primary schools, the optional subject Healthy Lifestyles has been introduced and

which by its content, among other things, has exactly that purpose. Given the importance of the topics that it covers, according to the interlocutors, it should be made a compulsory subject, because very few students choose it. So, in addition to the family, school also plays an important role in education as a tool for prevention of alcohol use among young people.

It would be best if we invest to make the optional subject Healthy Lifestyles a compulsory. Children through that subject have the opportunity to gain some basic information on prevention. It would not be bad to check how many children are actually covered by this subject. We were stunned in 2018. by a small number of children who attended it. (NGO)

School is very important because there are various workshops and projects in the school that can involve children. What will perhaps attract the most attention of the youth, is possibly the direct transfer of experience from a former alcohol addict. It is very important to promote healthy lifestyles that need to be implemented in schools. (E)

Well, I think that we should start with education as early as possible, already in primary school. How it all begins, how one enters that vicious circle. Introduce them perhaps to concrete examples, maybe in the framework of some of these workshops and invite persons who overcome this problem and, in that way, through the experience, educate young people. Of course, we should not forget professionals who would also present this problem i.e. the consequences of alcoholism. (J)

Just provide children more information, what are the consequences of excessive alcohol consumption, and how one comes to the stage that they consume too much alcohol and become addicted. (PPP)

This should be done by persons who are trained and educated for it, not necessarily teachers. I don't know how much time they have or how much the children pay attention when the teacher tells them something that is not his profession most often. I think it reaches out to them more when someone new comes and tells them about it. And I don't think that it should be an ordinary class, but that there should be a system, to tell them - we will talk twice a year about addiction and, among other things, alcohol. (P)

I think that some kind of less formal communication with young people is needed. Through discussions that would be held at the school level. When we have this kind of discussion and when there

is no teacher, when it is not a classic lecture, then we can get much better data, and we have a situation where young people will open up to us. As soon as we have some adults, we immediately have a barrier - young people do not want to talk and do not want to be open. (NGO)

The subject Healthy Lifestyles should certainly be included in the secondary education, since at that age young people are going through a period of physical and mental maturation, which is why they are somehow most tempted to try alcohol for the first time. Given that we are talking about young people who already have their idols in the art, sports and scientific world, one of the good ideas is to include persons who are role models for the younger generations in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

The promotion of healthy lifestyles, that need to be implemented in schools, is very important. Given the character of today's youth, it depends a bit on the new media. It might not be bad to include in these promotions of healthy lifestyles some public figures or persons who are already role models for the youth. (E)

Of course, one subject in school is not enough for children and young people to understand the full gravity of the problems that can be caused by alcohol consumption. Other ways of educating young people should be included. Many NGOs contribute to this by organizing workshops, lectures, and other activities to familiarize young people with the multiple consequences of alcohol use. However, the harmful consequences of alcohol consumption are such that they represent a complex and long-term problem in a society and as such require constant attention and continuous work. This means that the education itself, no matter how meaningful and comprehensive, is not enough, our interlocutors agree. Young people should be given the opportunity to have a richer everyday life, which means that they should be introduced with healthy lifestyles in practice and apply them. Every young person can work on developing some talents, spend free time in a better way, do sports, some kind of art, be part of a volunteer group and similar. Thus they will enrich life with activities that make them satisfied, fulfilled and where they can develop themselves.

I think that this is a long-term process and continuous work is needed. Lectures and one workshop are not enough and we should have long-term programs that will deal with this topic. (E)

We need to work on improving healthy lifestyles and enabling young people to use their free time adequately, through some sports and cultural events or to become involved in different

activities in order to reduce the possibility for them to have too much free time, which they could spend on the streets or in places where alcohol is available. **(E)**

*When we talk about prevention, it is not only educating young people about the harmfulness of alcohol consumption, but we also advocating that young people should be offered the opportunity to make good use of their free time. Is it engaging them in some cultural and artistic activities or in some activities related to volunteer work and contribution to community development. Simply, provide them with the opportunity to spend their free time well, so that alcohol would not be the only type of entertainment that comes to their minds. **(NGO)***

*I just know what we shouldn't do, and that's the biggest problem. When we talk about the education of young people in our country, most often, even when we talk about this topic, it all comes down to organizing some workshops within schools where some people come and tell them something. They find it terribly boring and dull, as they would say. That kind of education is of no use. They don't get involved that way nor do they take it seriously. I am sure that we should of course work with them, maybe through some other models and organize these workshops in some other way, so that they are not classic lectures - through some different roles or through their specific engagement and involvement. We should come up with something. **(P)***

So, young people who are naturally curious, exploring, ready for new life challenges, should be provided with an alternative. They need to be offered meaningful life options, healthier ways to use their time, something that will be more attractive than consuming alcohol and that will oppose all other forces that make alcohol attractive, such as their peers, media, some of their inner insecurities and troubles. The model of youth work is a good model that can interest young people and take them out of the streets, cafes, casinos and bookmakers.

We had a model for a long time to hire a medical professional who gave a lecture specifically on drugs and what types of drugs are used. However, this is a bit outdated model. What has been done in Europe for a long time is indirect targeting of the problem through youth work - through the formation of youth clubs and centers, through the empowerment of youth workers, through some form of mandatory engagement for young people to spend at least one or two hours

per week, for example in a youth club and use content that is socially acceptable. These are some forms of prevention, prevention to move those young people from streets, cafes or casinos, bookmakers. And those are usually places, where alcohol is consumed. So, for my notion of prevention, it would be to empower youth clubs and centers and offer as much content as possible so that they have the opportunity to discover their potential, to be empowered. Than the need for alcohol consumption will be reduced. In general, that idea will not be attractive to them anymore. (YW)

It is something that works much better on young people and on all of us. When you don't just tell people: you shouldn't do that, it's harmful and don't do that, it will make you sick because of this and that, but when you give them what they will do! So, you will be healthy because you will do sports, so you will do this and that, then you will go hiking, and you will socialize in this way. You do not have to socialize consuming alcohol. Young people need to be offered an option. If you just tell them: "Don't drink alcohol", and you haven't offered them another option, what will they do when they get together? (E)

It is necessary to offer young people an alternative because the reasons why they try alcohol, apart from peer pressure, are often a lack of self-confidence, insecurity, or some other reason. (NGO)

To show them illustratively how alcohol affects people. Especially because of their alcohol consumption habits, such as weekend or situational alcohol consumption, which seems normal to us and that it does not have an impact. It is important to show them that they can have fun without alcohol. When I was a high school student, there was a place in Podgorica where alcohol was not served, but there were some fruit cocktails and similar, so it would not be bad to promote something like that. (NGO)

Given that the problem of alcohol use among adolescents has not only health but also psychosocial consequences, the education of young people should be approached in a multidisciplinary manner. It is necessary to engage experts from multiple fields, which means that in addition to health workers, psychologists, pedagogues and sociologists should be more intensively involved. Also, quality prevention of alcohol consumption among young people through education should include some other institutions and stakeholders whose interest is to reduce the consequences of alcohol consumption, in order to more comprehensively cover the problem. Not only the educational community, but also social

and child protection institutions, police and prosecutors.

Since the attention of young people is largely focused on social networks, relevant institutions together with the media and civil society, should develop a multisector approach to alcohol prevention and create a sustainable active campaign that will point out to the harmful effects of alcohol and thus change the mindset of young people.

I will again invoke this multidisciplinary approach as there are more segments and more professions that deal with this issue from different aspects. Is not the abuse of psychoactive substances a matter of interest to both the educational community and the health community and social and child protection, customs regulations, police and prosecutors? We should look at the problem much more broadly. (NGO)

The attention of young people is somehow constantly focused on social networks. The topic is such that it requires a multisector approach, so that first of all the Government but also other stakeholders, such as the media and civil society organizations, etc. should advocate the creation of an active campaign that will point out the harmful use of alcohol in the first place. And on the other hand, on its dangers. There is a clear correlation between the occurrence of traffic accidents and the use of alcohol. In addition, the use of alcohol is significantly associated with the development of numerous diseases in alcoholics. Campaign needs to change awareness, collective awareness. (NGO)

Prevention of alcohol use through adolescent education should be tailored to the adolescents themselves and their problems, the different temptations they go through, the challenges they face, the emotional crises and novelties that occur during adolescence. Education through workshops should prepare young people how to channel some of their emotions, to know how to assess the value of some life situations, the harmfulness of some choices and to know how to set boundaries. Again, the role of the family must not be forgotten when it comes to adolescents. This relationship of trust between the child and the parents should be constantly built and maintained, through conversation, personal examples, of course now adapted to their age.

Education of young people is certainly very important. Alcohol is usually the first addiction that young people encounter. Young people are quite understandably prone to experimentation,

different types of parties, going out, competitions in the amount of drinking, mixing drinks that leads to poisoning. Some just want to be understood, some are curious. Some feel more powerful or run away from problems. Education should range from information on the problems caused by alcohol, through conversations, to raising the satisfaction of young people. (TA)

Young people still don't have the proper skills on how and in what way to deal with emotions, how to deal with that feeling that they are not important enough and valuable enough, that they do not have a sense of belonging, that someone does not understand them, that they are unsuccessful in some endeavor of life or in romantic relationships. All this is intensified by the adolescent developmental crisis, which is not called a crisis without a reason. That period of their life is in a way difficult, although adults somehow perceive that it will pass easily. Education should serve to raise awareness that there are different solutions, different ways out of such situations, different ways to deal with a painful emotion they are feeling at that moment. Yes, it seems at times that alcohol or drugs are instant solution, the easiest way out, which actually is not true. Through some skills, through some education, workshops, they can be taught how to better channel their emotions. When they learn that, when they set boundaries, then spontaneously and automatically the need to artificially stop the pain decreases. (PPP)

I think that the most basic and the first thing is the family and the conversation. I talk to my children persistently. I have a 16-year-old daughter and we have talked about this topic for a long time, a couple of times. I even went out with her in bars and talked about alcohol and all other vices. Especially about alcohol because I already see that a lot of children in her surrounding consume it. I think the most important thing is the freedom of the child. Not to forbid to the child, but to explain what the consequences of alcohol are and what impact alcohol has. The child should not be told exactly: "No, you can't", yet provide a negative perception. The child should be aware of the consequences, of what can and might happen. (P)

How much does the media contribute to the consumption of alcohol by young people and does the advertising of alcoholic beverages encourage the consumption by young people?

In modern society, the media play a significant role in the life of every person. When it comes to the younger generation, we are witnessing that the most important medium for them is the Internet, and through it social networks which are the dominant form of social communication. In terms of attitudes towards alcohol consumption, the media can play a dual role. On the one hand, a strong promoter of alcoholic beverages, and on the other hand, a means by which one can react educationally in order to point out harmful consequences of alcohol.

The interlocutors in our research agree that the influence of the media on the spread of alcohol use is unquestionable and increasingly important. Of all the media content, the influence and power of alcohol advertisements stand out the most. Since they are often potent producers of beverages, whose advertisements are of a very high quality, effective, well-designed and sticky, they attract the attention of young people by sending the message that alcohol consumption is a socially acceptable act. There are numerous examples of domestic producers where in the advertising of alcoholic beverages it is consumed in the family, with cheerful company, etc.

Well, I think that the society primarily is, so to say, the first layer of influence on the spread of alcoholism and the promotion of alcoholism. Then there are the media because they have a significant impact on the youth, and thus on the spread of alcohol consumption. The advertisements are of interest to the youth because quite a few of the advertisements are well done and interesting, and the youth are probably interested in them in a way. Why shouldn't they try it when it looks so good. (E)

In general, through the media, we have a constant promotion of alcoholic beverages, something that can greatly affect young people and give them an incentive to start consuming alcohol. (Y)

The media is an integral part of our lives today. They create public opinion and promote values. The fact is that by advertising alcoholic beverages, the media is sending a message to young people that drinking is acceptable. We are witnessing advertisements about beer, for example, where there is always a happy group of friends, families with a positive atmosphere. Everything about beer is advertised as a desirable form of behavior and living, while, it is the complete opposite. (TA)

We are too proud of some of our alcoholic beverages. In the world, the use of cigarettes is organized in a way that you can't even see it in the store and you have to ask for them in order to get them. We exhibit all harmful products in visible places and often at the height of children's eyes. It would not be bad to map places, especially near schools, to see thus, how many places there are where children are exposed to direct advertising. (NGO)

Therefore, some interlocutors, especially those who have personally felt all the negative aspects of the effects of alcohol, take a radical stance towards advertising, and believe that the media should stop advertising alcoholic beverages because they are only serving for profit and harm to people. A slightly milder solution could be not to advertise alcoholic beverages throughout the day, but only in certain periods, and the advertisements should contain a warning that the drink is not suitable for children under 18 years of age, as well as all the harmful consequences that drink can have on a human being.

Advertising of alcoholic beverages should be banned because it is only there for profit and harm people. (TA)

Certainly, marketing is necessary for the media, so these commercials should be advertised during the part of the day when the youth is not watching at all, or is watching in small numbers. On the other hand, somewhere at the end of these advertisements, you should definitely have a warning that this content is not suitable for people under 18 years of age. (E)

I think that in addition to those labels under 18, under 16, there should be some consequences displayed... as there are on cigarettes. Subsequently, to limit the promotion of alcohol. (Y)

I think they encourage. I think that the allowed limit should be moved in terms of time when it should and could be shown. One could certainly take into account the ways in which it is offered and advertised. If you remember that slogan - when I drink I don't drive-? In my opinion, this is a very wrong approach. The moment I say it, when someone hears it - when I drink I don't drive - it can be interpreted like - and when I don't drive, I can drink-. No one takes a substance for the first time with the expectation that they will become addicted to it, so that is clear. (NGO)

Although in Montenegro we have laws that stipulate that commercials that advertise, mention or show alcoholic beverages may not be broadcasted

during the time when children watch, research data from NGOs show that this is not respected at all, and that Montenegrin televisions broadcast a very high number of advertisements in which alcohol is consumed, also during prohibited intervals.

In our country, it is generally prescribed by the law that advertisements containing alcohol may not be broadcasted in the intervals provided for children. In the report on the implementation of the national strategy is written that an adequate mechanism for monitoring media advertising when it comes to alcohol is still not established. (NGO)

The influence of the traditional media on today's young people is certainly not as strong as when it comes to social networks. Unfortunately, the promotion of alcoholic beverages is difficult to control there, and the contents that young people follow are full of clips in which alcohol is consumed.

You will rarely see a young person turn on the TV because they are informed through social networks. The promotions of alcoholic beverages are very present there. And there is the presentation of parties where you see tons of alcohol. Unfortunately, we are creating such a system that that kind of people become idols to our young people, and that makes it a huge problem. (NGO)

The media can make a significant contribution to the better education of the young population. The media should constantly deal with the problems and harmful consequences of alcohol use and not just on the international day or month dedicated to this issue. The word of the experts, which could be heard at least every month, would send clear messages to young people, their parents, teachers. Such content should be especially represented in the media that young people follow, i.e. on social networks.

I think it would be good to organize guest appearances on the topic of alcoholism more often. Somehow globally, when it comes to the problem of addiction, the media mostly follow it on two occasions related to the celebration of International Days, which is June 26, the International Day against Drug Abuse, and now November and December, the Addiction Awareness Month. And then everyone wants to talk about that topic. I often say that we should have one term every month that is provided for this topic, because in that way we can influence people who watch television. Maybe not directly young people, but a clear and important message can be sent to

their parents or teachers. On the other hand, we should use these social networks where young people spend a lot of time, to display videos or something related to alcoholic beverages, to share that message – the use of alcohol use among children is excluded. (E)

It is very important that specific media focus more on ... content that will speak of the harmful effects of alcohol. (E)

What legal restrictions regarding the availability, i.e. purchase, as well as the sale and serving of alcohol should be implemented in Montenegro when it comes to young people?

The traditional attitude towards alcoholic beverages, which is nurtured in Montenegrin society, also affects the compliance with legal restrictions related to serving alcoholic drinks in cafes and restaurants to persons under 18 years of age. Also, the sale of alcoholic beverages to persons under 18 years of age is prohibited in the gas station and newsagents. These legal measures are good, our interlocutors agree, but they are not respected in an adequate way. In cafes, young people are not asked for ID cards to check how old they are, and children are often used by third parties to buy alcoholic beverages in the store. Control over the implementation of these legal measures is the responsibility of the inspection, however, data show that inspectors are not frequent visitors to places where alcohol is served. What needs to be done is to improve law enforcement mechanisms and work to strengthen oversight of law enforcement so that some visible results can be obtained. The interlocutors mostly cite profit, as the main reason for violating these measures.

The legal framework is very important. The other thing is that even though it exists, it is not respected. I will send now the child to the store to buy any alcohol and I am sure they will sell it to him without anyone wondering if they have broken the law, because again the goal is profit. I also assume that, in the tavern, a minor who orders alcohol will be served. I believe that rigorous controls and higher penalties should be introduced for both producers and hospitality industry. The fines should be exclusively monetary, because our people are warned only when you take money out of their pockets. (TA)

The serving and consumption of alcohol under the age of 18 is prohibited and regulated by the Law on Tourism and Hospitality. Whether and to what extent cafes serve alcohol to minors is the responsibility of the tourist and local inspection. And this whole situation with COVID

and the control of current epidemiological measures showed that the number of inspectors is not very high. (NGO)

I think that the availability is very high for children, even alcohol is sold to children aged 7-8. I think some limit needs to be set, so that children can't buy alcohol. I think that this is actually one of the first recommendation I would make. (P)

And unfortunately, our market is as it is, everything is available and we are all aiming to sell, even in the times before Corona. We can't use it as an excuse all the time. It doesn't matter to whom we sell a pack of cigarettes or alcohol, it is important that the sales are good. Whether we harm a child or not does not matter because it is not our child and why we should worry about it. I think that first we need to rethink to ourselves, then the state and everything else. Yet the state has an influence and I think it could do a lot. (E)

How much do current prices of alcoholic beverages affect the consumption of alcoholic beverages by young people?

The prices of alcoholic beverages in Montenegro, in addition to their availability in stores, further increase the possibility of alcohol use among young people. This enables to even greater extent young people to easily get alcohol on any occasion. Since they are unemployed and have only pocket money, they always choose the cheapest drinks. Working with young people leads many interlocutors to the conclusion that young people prefer to spend that pocket money on alcohol than on some other activities.

Today, there are many types of alcohol to buy at both cheap and expensive prices. I notice sometimes, on Fridays when I go out, that young people in large numbers buy alcohol, the cheap one, which again raises the question of the poor quality of the alcohol they consume. At that age, they take money from their parents, who do not have a big pocket money to give them. (NGO)

It is true that the prices of certain alcohol are affordable. They are affordable because one can of beer costs like one chocolate. But again, this is something that is so on a global level, prices cannot be adjusted just because of one group of people. Again, it is a matter of setting boundaries, whether someone will say no, whether they will choose to spend 1.5 euros on something else or to spend it on alcohol. (PPP)

Well, it seems to me the price certainly affects. Whether those drinks are expensive or not, I don't know. To go back to those young people, I work with. When there is a seminar, no matter how much money their parents gave them, they will spend them for alcohol. That's for sure. If I tell them: "Okay, would you like to go on a trip, but you also have to participate a bit, not much, up to 2 euros", they will not accept it, but they will certainly spend 5 euros that night on beer and cigarettes. (NGO)

Alcoholic beverages are relatively cheap because in that way they are available to almost everyone. For a couple of euros, you can buy a glass of wine or beer. (TA)

The interlocutors mostly agree that the increase in the prices of alcoholic beverages could lead to a decrease in the use of alcohol by young people. If the price of alcoholic beverages increased, young people would not be able to afford as much alcohol as when its price is low. However, despite that, some of the interlocutors think that in that case young people would somehow find a way to get a drink, and that the increase of the price of alcoholic beverages may not be a decisive factor in reducing alcohol consumption among young people.

If we increase the prices of alcoholic beverages, so that it becomes a luxury than, for example, the prices of some other foods, which are much more significant, must become lower. I find it quite OK. In my opinion, it is now very easy to find cheap alcoholic beverages. Children can buy drinks from their pocket money on a daily basis. (E)

An increase in the price of alcohol alone could affect the reduction of consumption, but then I am afraid that in that case they would do some other things in order to be able to buy alcohol. These are all things that are interconnected and we can get out of one problem and then enter into another one. (NGO)

I think it is available. It is not that expensive. I think it affects in a way, but again it's not crucial. (P)

