

# Current alcohol policy debate in Norway

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# New government in February

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- From coalition (Labour party/Center party) to one party rule
- Consequences for alcohol policy unclear:
  - Labour party among the architects of Norwegian alcohol policy
  - But faces pressure to «modernize»
- Popularity of govt has increased

# Alcohol policy discussions



- Farm sales
- Alcohol sales in grocery stores
- Other issues: Opening hours, drinking in public places, alcohol serving at sports events, advertising rules

# Farm sales

- Norway is bound by EU rules through the EEA agreement
  - Agricultural products are not covered
- Norway already allows sales of certain alcoholic agricultural products above 4,7 %
  - Ciders, fruit wines and mead,
- Farm sales of grape wine and spirits not allowed – for now...
- Politicians pay attention to other countries
  - Parliament has ordered the Government to review the possibilities of introducing a «Swedish model»
  - Goal: to support local producers and agritourism
  - However, the issue has been reviewed before, and it was seen as «problematic»





# Alcohol sales in grocery stores

- Norwegian politicians have also paid attention to developments in Finland:
  - Previous policy platform of the Conservative party included the sale of alcoholic products up to 8 percent by volume in grocery stores
  - Goal: to modernize alcohol policy and to support local producers
- A real threat to the Monopoly – the Conservative party could form the next government together with the even more liberal Progress Party...
- However, the new policy platform has deleted this paragraph
  - Probably because they realized that local producers did not want it
- Threat seems to be over for now
  - Buy's time to evaluate developments in Finland...



# Push to «modernize» or loosen regulations

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- Ongoing debate about opening hours and days of sale of alcohol
  - Gradual extension of availability over many years...
  - Discussions about serving times on public holidays (e.g. opening alcohol service earlier on the 17th of May)
  - Discussions about alcohol service at sports events
    - Commercial pressure, source of income for sports clubs, a way to «control» alcohol use at events
    - But also: a tradition that sports and alcohol don't match, and a wish to create a safe arena for children and young people
- Lifting the ban on drinking in public spaces?
  - Labour party platform open to allowing drinking in certain areas of parks etc. Already supported by the Liberal party (Venstre), the Conservative party (Høyre) and the Progress Party, i.e. a majority
  - Last week: Labour party decided to go against it and wait for the result of an expert commission

# The alcohol advertising ban

- Recurring calls to «modernize» the alcohol advertising ban
  - allowing producers to use social media to present their production and their products
  - Allowing advertising for alcohol free products with same brand as alcoholic products
  - but: difficult to design new rules that don't open a lot of new loopholes
- New tool in the enforcement of the alcohol advertising ban:
  - Until September 2024: Violations were met with a warning and a threat of a fine if the violation is repeated
  - From September: An infringement fine for violations of the alcohol advertising ban finally implemented

First case: The band Ballinciaga threatened with 2,5 mill NOK fine for extensive illegal marketing of their own range of alcoholic drinks



Foto: Frode Hansen / VG

## **Ballinciaga risikerer millionkrav: Derfor slettet de alle innlegg**

Ballinciaga og deres partnere risikerer bot på nesten 2,5 millioner kroner. Nå svarer gruppen på kritikken, etter å ha gjort en rekke endringer.





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