

Violence and other harms among young tourists

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT IT?

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Facts

South European tourist enclaves are attractive for young people, due to their good weather, and vibrant nightlife.

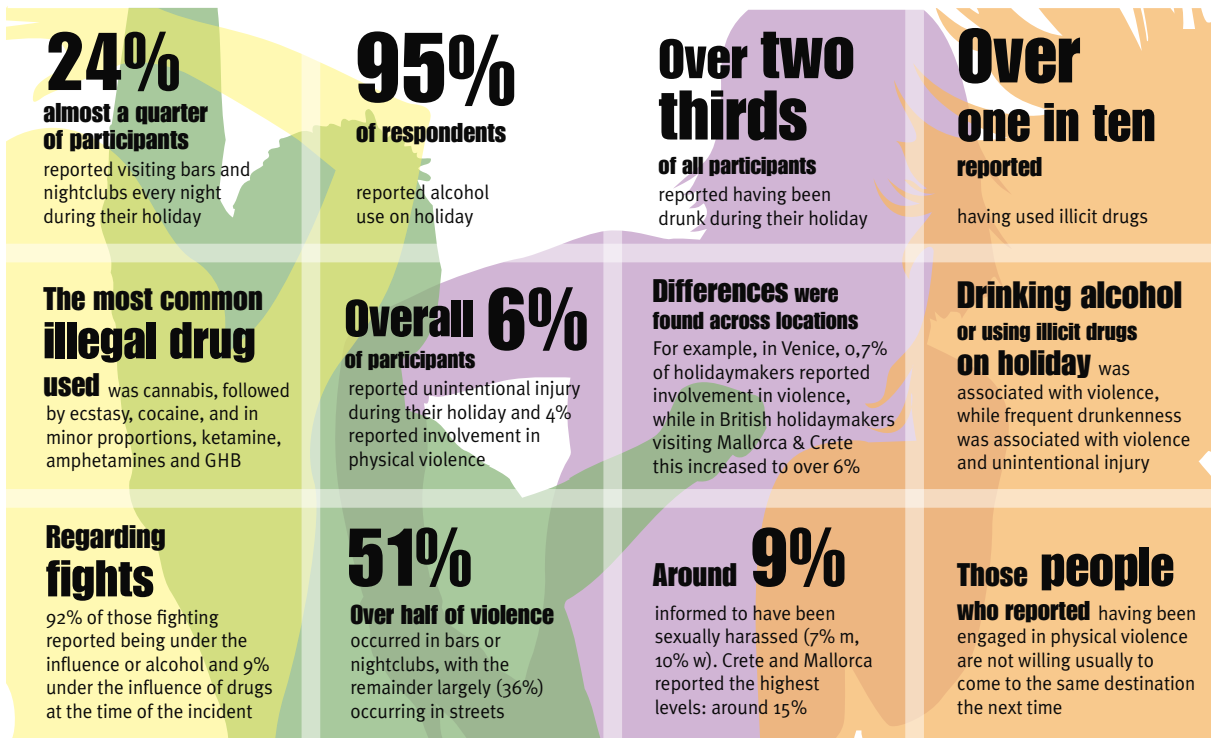
Easy availability and low price offers allow millions of young people to holiday in South European resorts every summer, often staying for one or two weeks.

Nightlife has become one of the main local tourist industries.

In summer 2007, the most popular reason for visiting the Balearic Islands among young people was nightlife (68%), followed by the weather (53%). In 2009, these reasons were also the most popular for over 6.000 young British and German holidaymakers visiting Portugal (Faro), Spain (Palma de Mallorca), Italy (Venice), Greece (Heraklion, Crete) & Cyprus (Larnaca): 59% chose their destination for its good weather and 52% for its nightlife.



From this young tourist sample collected in summer 2009:



Asking local key informants about the cause of such incidents, some factors appear to be relevant: low-price alcohol offers, promotions either from tour-operators or local nightlife venues showing easy access to sex opportunities, or directly the promotion of sex shows linked to the excessive alcohol use. **These promotions offer a harmful image of the destination, in which the visitor gets the impression that everything is allowed there, with no consequences for risky or non civic behaviors during their holidays.**



Implications



Nightlife participation is an important reason for choosing a holiday destination. Therefore, **recreational nightlife must be an important issue for consideration, in order to ensure a safe, healthy and high quality tourist service.**

→ **These data show us the need for a change in the way mass youth tourism is understood.** Local and international stakeholders should promote a change in how holiday resorts are marketed and managed to bring about improvements in expectancies, attitudes and behaviours of young tourists abroad. Then nightlife industry, for example, has a privileged position to prevent and reduce harm among tourists visiting local nightlife. **International promoters**, particularly important **holiday-operators**, have the capacity to change the type of image that is being promoted in certain tourist resorts. All these initiatives should be supervised and promoted by regional, national and European institutions. **Regulation should improve the quality conditions in the tourism industry, in terms of health and security, and this should also bring about a positive economical impact.**

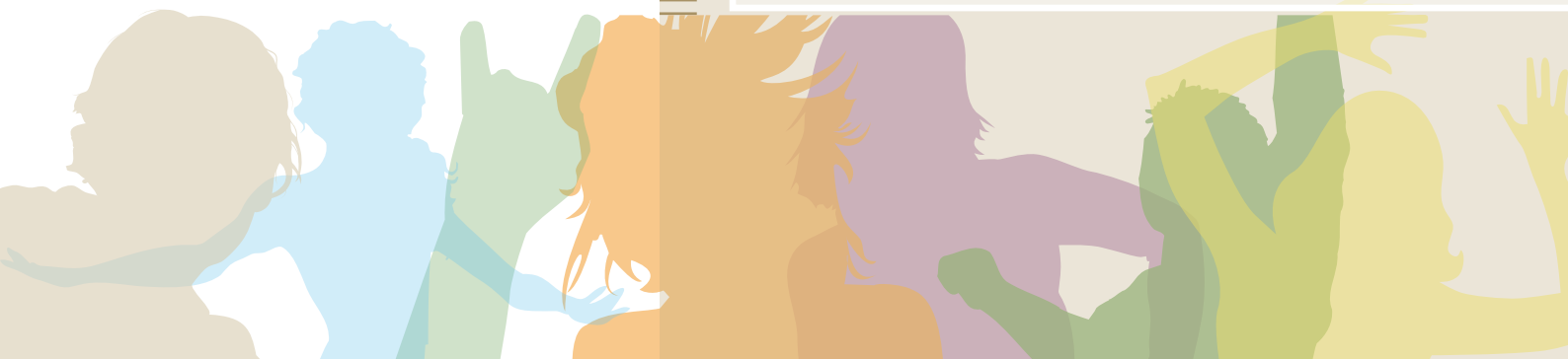
Young tourists report considerable levels of **problems during their holiday: violence, unintentional injuries, robbery and sexual harassment**, among others, and these **are facts linked in general terms to alcohol and drug abuse during nightlife**. Young people report frequent alcohol use, high levels of drunkenness and also an active involvement in nightlife during their holidays.

Every year, young tourists die in holiday resorts, due to violence, traffic crashes, or other alcohol or illegal drug related behaviours: intoxications, jumping from the hotel balcony, or other accidents.

These problems are widely reported in the media and **give a negative image of touristic destinations.**

The more alcohol that is sold and consumed in a short period of time, the more health and safety problems can be experienced: for example **violent fights at night**.

Consequently, **it is not nightlife itself that promotes necessarily unhealthy or unsafe problems among youngsters, but the cases of bad nightlife management, including widespread and cheap alcohol offers and the image of permissiveness for any behavioral excess**, including sexual activity.



Recommendations for the nightlife industry

Make sure your venue complies with certain health and safety requirements:

Provide secure access and admission: monitor people in line, develop and display house policy statements, practice age verification, ensure capacity is not exceeded and avoid overcrowding.

Provide good physical environment: control room temperature and ventilation, provide seating areas, clear away empty glasses and bottles, maintain a good ratio of staff/patrons, identify intoxicated clients, avoid dark or hidden areas and control music volume.

Make sure the social environment does not promote disorderly behaviours: ensure that entertainment is not overly violent or sexual, prevent the promotion of excessive drinking, establish and enforce behaviour standards.

Staff training: make sure your staff understand and engage in responsible server practices and build staff competences in negotiating skills to guarantee the best quality standards and avoid incidents and harms.

Set up an internal/external coordination plan: to standardise in-house operational activities and establish protocols to collaborate with police and medical services.

Regulate price and availability of alcohol beverages: avoid discounts and promotions or ensure they do not encourage excessive drinking or are linked to sexual or violent images, promote non-alcoholic and low-alcohol drinks or alcohol-free alternatives, offer water to those customers that may be on need of it and serve soft drinks and snacks when preparing for closing time.

THIS WORKS!

■ **The Healthy Nightlife Toolbox (HNT)**
Is an international initiative that focuses on the reduction of harm from alcohol and drug use among young people through the promotion of evaluated interventions to be implemented in the nightlife scene.

More info at: <http://www.hnt-info.eu/>



■ **Responsible Beverage Service in Sweden**
A responsible beverage service training programme has been developed in Stockholm as part of the STAD programme. The training programme began operating in 1997 and, in 1999, became mandatory for licensed premises that stayed open until 1am or later. It predominantly targets alcohol servers, but can also be delivered to other staff working in drinking establishments, including managers and door supervisors.

More info at: <http://www.fhi.se/en/Highlights/Responsible-Beverage-Service/>

■ **The 'Best Bar None' award scheme**
Is a Home Office backed UK wide scheme. The scheme aims to reduce alcohol-related crime and irresponsible drinking through promoting responsible management and operation of licensed premises, according to a commonly agreed national benchmark. All premises are then visited by accredited assessors who undertake an assessment of the premises. There are minimum standards that need to be reached to gain approval (door policy, crime prevention strategy, emergency procedures and alcohol and drugs policies). The rewards for licensees include, the prestige of being part of the awards scheme, increased business within the area and lower insurance, resulting from the fact that they are running safer establishments. Premises gaining the award, display a plaque outside.

For more information visit: <http://www.bbuk.com>

Selling less alcoholic drinks does not mean losing profits

Conversely, establishing a good pricing policy can be a demonstration that venues care about their clients and are working towards the establishment of health and security standards to protect their customers well-being, while maintaining profit levels by selling less at a higher price.

Recommendations at EU policy level

Results from the study on holidaymakers, have revealed that violence, unintentional injuries, sexual harassment, alcohol intoxication and other illegal substances use, is a reality among young people across Europe visiting South European tourist resorts. In accordance with this, we should look for a common European strategy.

0 **Nightlife is not a marginal activity**

So, there is the need to ensure that European citizens, when travelling abroad, will enjoy similar safety conditions when they participate in nightlife.



1 **European standards in nightlife should be established**

through research, evaluation of best practices and consensus among institutions.



2 **Legislative and coordination policies and measures**

should be created and implemented, to minimise those health consequences in this risk population but also in order to avoid the dissemination of this model of mass-tourism to other emergent locations.



3 **Cooperation between countries at different levels is necessary:**

people travel from one country to another, standards in nightlife organization are different between countries, violence should be tackled from an European perspective profiting the international structure that many tour operators and other leisure industries have.



4 **European organisations as the EU Commission should provide a political and practical reference framework where all parties involved can find the best practices to perform in their sector, and a way of coordinating these local and national efforts, by means of the creation of a permanent working commission with this purpose.**

In this framework, the tourism industry — which includes travel agencies, tour-operators, airline companies, hotel chains and smaller local industry representatives, like bar and nightclub owners— should be made aware of the short profit of this conception: mass tourism, focused on high alcohol consumption and the promotion of unhealthy ways of behavior, will only bring short term benefits, as people experiencing problems will not return to the same place. At the same time, promoting this kind of tourism degrades the zone into a poor and limited resort, and young people will look for other emerging alternatives.

Recommendations at local or regional level



Local authorities can play a key role in the promotion of these changes. They are in the perfect place to act as a mediator between all the different interests of the agents involved. Local nightlife industries, hotels and travel agencies may be willing to promote single actions, but these usually have low impact unless they become part of **a wider strategy with community participation and a multi-component approach that sets up the short and long term objectives.**

Only active collaboration between these groups and the implementation of evidence based programs will guarantee the success. Therefore, local authorities should:

- ➔ **Ensure legislation works towards the implementation of these changes** and ensure enough resources to enforce the law.
- ➔ **Promote the implementation of evidence-based programs.**
- ➔ **Promote a local working group, to encourage joint prevention actions and assign responsibilities;** each key stakeholder (industry representatives, consulate representatives, town council representatives, health and security ministries, neighbourhood representatives and all other civil groups and parties directly involved) should participate to present their particular point on view and set out problems as well as potential solutions to solve them.
- ➔ **Sponsor awards for those agents,** especially the tourist and nightlife industry, working towards a safer and healthier nightlife to acknowledge their efforts to combine their operational activity and the promotion of a public health approach to improve young tourist's health and safety.

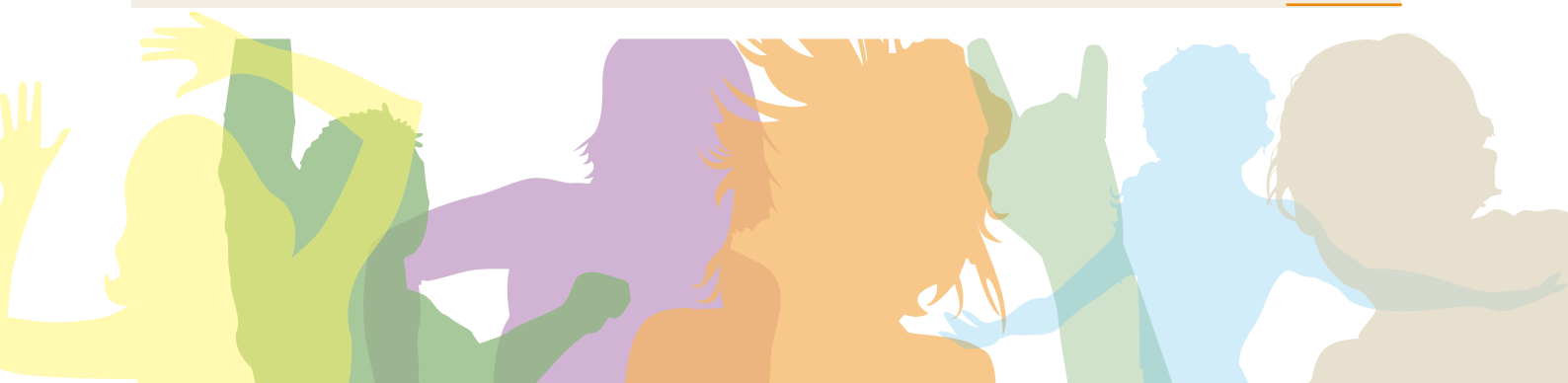


Recommendations for international tour-operators



In general terms, tourist locations should be promoted as attractive and healthy places, where people are expected to behave like they would do in their own countries:

- ➔ At present, when addressing young people, many examples of offers can be found on websites and promotional materials for tourists resorts and their nightlife venues suggesting easy sex opportunities, cheap alcohol access, deviant and unsocial behaviour (including those promoted through home-made videos showing intoxicated people and/or performing vandalism in the tourist resorts).
- ➔ Therefore, tour-operators, together with travel agencies have an important responsibility in the ways of promoting each location; **promotions should not focus on risk behaviours like drinking and sexual activity. Instead, destinations should be promoted as places where also other activities can be developed,** for example linked to culture, gastronomy, open-air sports, or any other activities linked to promotion of health.
- ➔ **It should be made very clear what behaviours are not acceptable among the local population, such as non civic behaviors,** intoxications, vandalism, breaking traffic rules, etc.



specific local Recommendations for the Balearic Islands



The problem

□ The most common incidents related to touristic nightlife in the Balearic Islands are alcoholic poisoning, injuries caused by fighting or as consequence of accidents; unprotected sex, thefts, noise and dirtiness. Recently, some tragic incidents, popularly known as “balconing” (jumping from the hotel balcony) have become sadly very frequently: in the summer season more than ten young people lost their lives by jumping/ falling from a balcony during their holidays.

The survey data from summer 2009, showed that the Balearic Islands have one of the highest levels of drunkenness (60% of tourists surveyed got drunk on more than half of the days during their holidays), violence (around 6% reported being involved in a physical fight) and sexual harassment (15,4%), compared with the other tourist locations surveyed. These are relevant data which should make us think about the tourist context conditions that are offered in the Balearic Islands.

□ There are some areas in Mallorca (like Arenal, Magalluf) or Ibiza where there is a massive concentration of tourists and nightlife. These places need special attention.

□ Tourism in the islands is characterised by a strong seasonality. This means that police and health services are heavily burdened during the summer.

□ The botellón phenomenon (local young people drinking on the street at night) is a pattern also adopted by young visitors: drunken tourists on the streets and beaches, not only at night, sometimes ending in a health emergency service due to intoxication, dehydration, sun burning or similar health consequences.

□ Levels of alcohol intake are very high. Happy hours are a frequent practice: for example free drinks, two drinks for the price of one, or “drink as much as you can” offers.



● The legal basis for good nightlife management and health prevention are already established. The problem is that, in reality, **there is no (or very poor) coalition and cooperation between local authorities and the nightlife industry.**

● Another point (especially in Mallorca) **is the lack of specific joint actions or programs that could be carried out together with the industry.** Practical technical criteria must be produced, in order to guide the application of the law.

● A specific regulation regarding nightlife staff training should be issued. **The NGO Irefrea offers a local quality staff training programme.**

● **Further regulation** about cheap alcohol offers, and the symbolism used in the advertisements (e. g. sex, violence) **is required.**

● **More good media campaigns sensitising tourists in the islands are needed.** These could be launched before the summer season, coordinated by Tourist and Health Authorities and similar organisations.

● Regarding the study, it is clear that recreational nightlife is one of the most important reasons for attracting visitors as also for local population. A nightlife venue assessment has been performed in the Balearic Islands. The general impression is that, **although many security and health measures are already being implemented, it is clearly still insufficient.**

● The key question then, the new challenge, **is how to motivate industry to get a real engagement in prevention;** how to create long lasting coalitions that would lead **to the implementation of sustainable programmes** (not only one-off campaigns). And also how to involve tour-operators and the tourism industry in this process.

● **There is the need for a general compromise from the whole Balearic society** to promote a safety, healthy and high quality image of our islands to the young tourists visiting us.



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