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Two New Laws Regulating Spirits Sales and Consumption

Report Categories:

FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

The Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) recently discussed two new laws concerning the sale and consumption of spirits in order to curb the increase in alcohol consumption, mainly by the young generation. The first law concerns the sales of spirits and the second limits the advertisement of alcoholic beverages.

General Information:

The Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) recently discussed two new laws concerning the sales and consumption of spirits in order to curb the increase in alcohol consumption, mainly by the young generation. In recent years the State of Israel faced an increase in car accidents caused by drunk drivers and a significant increase in club violence, mainly by young drinkers.

According to the first law, which was already approved by the government, drinking spirits in public areas will be prohibited between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am. Recently the proposal was expanded and drinking in a parked or moving car at these hours will also be prohibited in order to prevent people from drinking in cars in parking places. In addition, a policeman will be allowed to confiscate the spirits consumed by drinkers. The existing law forbids selling alcohol to people under the age of 18 years but many stores ignore the existing law. According to the proposed new law a store found selling spirits to underage patrons will be warned the first time. If there is a second infraction within two years from the first incident, a police officer will be authorized to close the store for 15 days without warning. The third time the store will be immediately closed for 30 days. The purpose of the sanctions against the stores, according to the proposal, is to increase the deterrent against illegal alcohol sales mainly in those stores in which the phenomena is reoccurring.

The second law, which was just brought up in the Knesset deals with the "Limitation on Advertisement and Marketing of Alcoholic Beverages". This law is based on the 1993 law which limited the advertisement of tobacco products for smoking. It proposes to limit the advertisement of alcoholic beverages and requires that the advertisement inform the public of alcohol's harmful effects.

The wine and spirits importers division in the Israeli Chamber of Commerce discussed the new proposals and concluded that the laws, as presented to the Knesset and the public are too stiff. It is clear that spirits consumption will be affected but the division also decided that it can not object such laws publicly. They decided to hire the services of a lobbyist who will try to convince the Knesset to expand the opening hours of the stores and to minimize the limitations on advertisements.