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French lawmaker proposes 3% tax on alcohol advertising

The budget amendment would cover promotional events by alcohol companies with at least 10 million euros in annual revenue.

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A French lawmaker has proposed a new 3% tax on alcohol advertising and public promotional events as part of France’s 2027 social security financing bill, a move that could raise marketing costs for major producers, importers, and distributors in one of Europe’s largest beverage markets.

The measure was filed Thursday in the National Assembly by Cyrille Isaac-Sibille, a member of the centrist Les Démocrates group, as an amendment to the draft budget bill for France’s social security system. The amendment is being examined in first reading by the Assembly’s Social Affairs Committee and is listed as still under review.

Under the text, the tax would apply to companies that produce, import, or distribute alcoholic drinks in France, or to their representatives, if their revenue in the last financial year was at least 10 million euros before value-added tax. The levy would be based on spending for the purchase of advertising space regardless of the type of medium or whether the format is physical or digital. It would also cover spending on public events and similar promotional activities.

The proposed rate is 3% of the pre-VAT amount of those expenses. Revenue from the tax would be assigned to France’s national health insurance fund. The amendment says the measure would take effect on Jan. 1, 2027.

The proposal targets a broad range of alcohol marketing activity. Its language is not limited to one specific channel and would extend across traditional advertising placements as well as newer digital formats. Because it also includes public events, the measure could affect sponsorships, brand activations, and other promotional spending commonly used by wine, beer, and spirits companies. If adopted, it would add a new cost layer for larger beverage businesses operating in France.

In the explanatory note attached to the amendment, Isaac-Sibille argues that alcohol advertising plays a significant role in consumption and that the current legal framework has not kept pace with social media and influencer marketing. He links the proposal to recommendations in a government mission report he authored, including a call to ban alcohol advertising on social networks.

The amendment cites public health data to justify the tax. It says France is the fourth-highest country in the OECD for alcohol consumption per person and that alcohol-related mortality accounts for 41,000 preventable deaths each year. According to the text, more than one-fifth of the population is affected by excessive alcohol consumption, with concerns described as especially serious among young people.

The explanatory note points in particular to binge drinking among teenagers and young adults. It cites data from the French Observatory of Drugs and Addictive Tendencies showing that one in 10 middle school students has already experienced drunkenness, and that 37% of 17-year-olds reported at least one episode of heavy drinking in the previous month. The note says this behavior triples the risk of developing alcohol dependence among people ages 18 to 25.

The lawmaker also argues that advertising directly influences minors and young adults. Citing the same observatory, the amendment says 23% of adolescents reported being influenced by an alcohol advertisement. It adds that national and international institutions, including France's Court of Auditors and the World Health Organization, have recommended tighter limits on alcohol advertising and have described such restrictions as among the most cost-effective tools to reduce harm.

The filing places the proposal in the context of France's 1991 Evin law, which restricted alcohol and tobacco advertising. According to the explanatory note, that law was effective when it was adopted because it limited alcohol promotion on media channels then most popular with young audiences, including television and print media, and also restricted the content of ads to objective characteristics of alcoholic drinks. The amendment argues that digital platforms have since weakened those protections.

It says young people are once again widely exposed to alcohol marketing through social media and influencers. Between 2021 and 2024, the advocacy group Addictions France identified 11,300 pieces of content promoting alcohol on online platforms, according to the amendment. It says those promotions were distributed by nearly 500 influencers and more than 800 brands, mainly large beer and spirits groups.

The amendment also cites a study from the School for Advanced Studies in Public Health that found 79% of people ages 15 to 21 see alcohol advertising every week on social media. The explanatory note says platforms are accessible from age 15 and that many minors misstate their age to access content. It argues that brands use influencers' closeness to followers and platform algorithms to target audiences and shape behavior, often presenting alcohol in a festive light while downplaying risks.

Isaac-Sibille’s note says the current system, which relies heavily on self-regulation for online advertising, is not sufficient. It says enforcement of the Evin law in the influencer economy is limited by a lack of resources to pursue illegal commercial partnerships. Addictions France, which works to raise awareness among creators about the law, found that 48% of 276 influencers it contacted continued to promote alcohol illegally, according to the amendment.

The text also argues that current reporting tools, including requests to platforms and France’s Signal Conso system, do not allow full oversight of all published content and struggle to stop the spread of unlawful ads. It says brands and influencers also use disappearing “stories” to get around the law and that such content represented 70% of alcohol-related posts identified in 2023. Because the posts vanish quickly, the amendment says, monitoring and sanctions become more difficult.

The proposed tax is part of a wider financing bill rather than a standalone alcohol control law, and it remains one amendment among many that lawmakers will review during debate on the 2027 social security budget. For now, it has been filed and published by the National Assembly, but it still must clear committee and parliamentary review before it could become law.