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Poland’s lower house sends alcohol bill with nonalcoholic beer ad ban to president

If enacted, the law would bar takeaway alcohol sales from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., widen curbs on discounts and branding, starting in 2027

Friday, November 20, 2026



Poland’s lower house, the Sejm, approved most of the Senate’s changes to a major alcohol-control bill on Thursday, November 19, keeping in place a proposed ban on advertising nonalcoholic beer under alcohol brand names and moving the legislation to

the president for signature.

The vote concerned amendments to Poland’s law on sobriety and counteracting alcoholism, as well as related health care provisions. Lawmakers accepted most of the Senate’s 21 amendments. But they rejected a Senate change that would have allowed advertising for nonalcoholic beer, preserving a stricter version of the bill that had earlier been backed by the Sejm’s health committee.

If signed, the measure would introduce a nationwide ban on retail takeaway alcohol sales from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The restriction would not apply to bars, restaurants or other food service businesses, and airports would be exempt. Municipal governments would also gain the power to widen the ban locally by starting it at 9 p.m. or extending it until 9 a.m.

The legislation would also tighten rules on alcohol advertising and promotions. Under the bill, alcohol advertising, including beer advertising, would be banned, with violations punishable by fines ranging from 30,000 zlotys to 1 million zlotys, or by a restriction of liberty under Polish law. At the same time, the bill keeps several limited exceptions.

One of the most important changes for retailers and producers is a broader definition of alcohol promotion. Senate revisions accepted by the Sejm specify that promotions would include discounts, multi-buy packages and loyalty programs. That would capture offers commonly used in stores, such as “6+6” or “12+12” deals. The measure would still allow alcohol advertising in wholesale outlets, food service locations and stores dedicated exclusively to alcohol sales. Until the end of 2030, sales outlets would also be allowed to keep using refrigerators and other equipment displaying alcohol trademarks.

The bill creates separate carve-outs for parts of the wine and craft beer industries. It defines “eno-culinary events,” where informational and cultural messages related to wine products would be allowed. The exceptions were also expanded to cover educational events and culinary tourism for craft breweries, as well as informational and cultural communications tied to craft beer.

Those details matter well beyond public health policy. If the bill becomes law, it could reshape store hours, discount strategies and brand marketing across one of Europe’s larger beverage markets, affecting brewers, wineries, distillers, importers and retailers that sell in Poland. The proposed rules would be especially significant for companies that rely on bundled promotions, branded equipment in stores or brand extensions from alcoholic to nonalcoholic drinks.

The brewing industry has already pushed back. In comments given to Forsal.pl, Bartłomiej Morzycki, director general of the Polish Brewers Association, said the law raises serious constitutional concerns and may also face questions over whether required European Union notification procedures were followed. He argued that the legislative process had focused too heavily on beer and beer advertising while failing to address what he described as the main drivers of harmful alcohol consumption, including small-format spirits. He also criticized the decision to treat nonalcoholic beer as strictly as vodka in advertising rules, saying that choice ignored a product category that more consumers are using as an alternative to alcohol.

The legislation is not yet in force. It must still be signed by the president and then published in the official journal before the new rules can take effect. Under the version approved after Senate changes, the law would take effect on June 1, 2027.