



Ministry of
Social Affairs and Health

Policy Change Updates and Impact of Alcohol Policy Changes in Finland

Saara Karttunen
Senior Specialist
17.6.2026

Programme of the Government 2023-2027 and Alcohol Act



- Traditionally, alcohol policy in Finland has been viewed primarily as a public health issue. During this government term, there has been a clear shift: alcohol policy is also seen as economic policy
- In general the Government wants to open markets and increase competition regarding alcohol
- According to the Government Programme:
 - *The Government aims to promote fair and open competition, and will continue to open up the markets decisively and responsibly. Conditions will be created for the growth of the domestic market and an increase in people's wellbeing and freedom.*
 - *The Government will reform Finland's alcohol policy in a responsible manner to make it more in line with the alcohol policy in other European countries.*
 - *The Government will not make changes to Alko's role and status with respect to public health.*

Government Proposal on Home Delivery, Cross-Border Distance Sales and Marketing (HE 131/2025 vp)



- The preparation of the proposal has been a long process, and the original proposal had to be withdrawn from Parliament and redrafted
- The latest proposal contains legislative amendments concerning home deliveries, distance selling and marketing (HE 131/2025)
 - The delivery of alcoholic beverages will be allowed
 - Cross-border distance selling will be clarified so that it is unambiguously permitted
 - Online marketing of strong alcoholic beverages allowed
 - The latest change still at the parliamentary stage: Alko's opening hours will be extended to correspond to retail opening hours → in future, Alko could also open on Sundays and Saturday evenings
- The act will be adopted by Parliament next week



Home Deliveries

- There will be a new kind of permit for delivering alcohol → alcohol could be delivered from Alko and retail shops
- Person delivering alcohol would have to have a delivery license (similar to serving license)
- Alcohol could be delivered anywhere customer wants (not just home delivery)
 - Some exceptions: no deliveries to health care units, substance abuse services units, schools, daycares etc.
- Same delivering hours as retail sales and Alko have



Home Deliveries

- Same restrictions on handing over beverages as in retail and serving of alcoholic beverages (age limits, intoxication etc.)
 - No requirement for strong electronic identification
 - According to the original government proposal, the recipient would only be required to verify their age upon request, but Parliament amended the proposal so that age must be checked every time
- Proposal enables also deliveries by couriers, for example Wolt
- Alcohol deliveries would be supervised through test purchases
 - Authorities could also use volunteer test purchasers

Cross-Border Distance Sales



- The legal situation regarding cross-border distance sales of alcohol has been unclear in Finland for almost 20 years
 - There has been interpretative uncertainty as to whether distance selling can be considered retail sales taking place in Finland and whether it can therefore be restricted
- In autumn 2025, the Supreme Court issued a precedent ruling finding that the distance sale had not taken place in Finland → clarified the legal situation
- The Act would explicitly lay down provisions to buy alcohol through cross-border distance sales from other EU/EEA countries and countries outside EU/EEA. In cross-border distance selling, alcoholic beverages containing up to 80% ABV could be purchased and delivered to Finland
- Distance selling would be linked to a delivery permit → only the licensed delivery operator would be allowed to hand over alcohol purchased via distance sales

Marketing of Alcohol Beverages



- To date, the marketing of strong alcoholic beverages (> 22%) has generally been prohibited
- The provisions on alcohol marketing would be amended so that online marketing of strong alcoholic beverages would be permitted
 - Marketing of strong alcoholic beverages should be subject to the same restrictions as those applied to mild alcoholic beverages: for example, it must not be directed at minors and must not be contrary to good practice
- The underlying aim is to enable domestic operators to engage in online marketing to other EEA countries
- During the consultation round, a ban on influencer marketing was proposed, but this was ultimately dropped due to opposition from businesses (as it would have placed domestic operators at an unfair disadvantage compared with foreign actors)

Government Proposal on Alcohol Producer's Rights to Sell Alcohol From Production Site (HE 44/2026 vp)



- All manufacturers of alcoholic beverages that produce no more than 100,000 litres of pure alcohol per year may sell, from the production site, alcoholic beverages produced there with an alcohol content exceeding 5.5/8.0%
 - The production volumes are higher than in farm sales in Sweden
- Restrictions:
 - A typical part of the production has to take place at the production site → for example, merely mixing beverages or bottling is not sufficient
 - The licence holder may conduct retail sales only at one production site that is physically separate from other manufacturers
 - The annual volume of takeaway sales of alcoholic beverages exceeding 5.5/8.0% may not exceed 25,000 litres of pure alcohol
 - No right to home delivery
- Government proposal is at Parliament → consideration continues in the autumn



Also in the Government Programme

- A study on the possibilities to allow sales of wines with an alcohol content of up to 15 per cent also elsewhere than in Alko shops → **completed in spring 2025**
- An independent study will be conducted on the possibilities to transfer the responsibility for the regulation of alcohol policy from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment → **in preparation at the Prime Minister's Office**
- Finland will apply for inclusion on the list of wine-producing countries in the EU → **Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry preparing**

Impacts of Alcohol Policy Change?



- Total alcohol consumption has been on a downward trend for over fifteen years
- In 2024, total alcohol consumption per inhabitant aged 15 and over was 8.3 litres of pure alcohol. Total consumption decreased by 4.4% compared to 2023
- It remains to be seen whether the declining trend in total consumption will continue despite changes in alcohol availability
- In the Government proposal it is estimated, that amendments would have relatively small impact on overall alcohol consumption at the societal level. However, law amendments may affect high-risk and problem alcohol users

Impacts of Alcohol Policy Change?



- The proposals will affect the scope, sale and justification of Alko's monopoly
- The increase in the percentage limit (8 %) for retail sales appears to have shifted sales from Alko to retail outlets
- The industry is pushing for allowing wine to be sold in retail stores
- Alko would not be financially viable in its current form if wine were allowed to be sold in grocery stores (KKV: Etukäteisarviointi viinien myynnin mahdollisesta vapauttamisesta (Tutkimusraportteja 2/2025))→ if wine is to be made available in grocery stores, a broader discussion on the future of the entire monopoly is necessary.
- Monitoring the impacts of the legislation of cross-border distance sales will be challenging, as no official statistics will be available—at least in 2025—on traveller imports or the volume of cross-border online purchases.

Finn's Attitudes Towards Alcohol Policy



- Attitude towards alcohol policy in 2026
 - 17% of respondents supported stricter alcohol policy (8 % in 2023)
 - 55% of respondents considered the current alcohol policy restrictions to be appropriate (53-57 % in the last 5 years)
 - 20 % of respondents preferred a more liberal alcohol policy (29 % 2023)
- Should wines be sold at retail stores?
 - In 2025, 43% of respondents believed that wines with an alcohol content of 8–15% should be sold in grocery stores (2022: 54 %)
 - When the question included an explicit reference to potential consequences for the sales system, this had a substantial impact on support
 - If allowing wine sales in grocery stores would also mean permitting the sale of strong alcoholic beverages there, only 24% of respondents would support making wine available in stores.

Source: *Terveysten ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (THL). Alkoholipoliittiset mielipiteet 2026. Tilastoraportti 4/2026. Suomen virallinen tilasto*

Thank you!