

Ireland passes law putting cancer warnings on alcohol

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Ireland ranks joint third for binge-drinking out of 194 countries, according to research by the World Health Organisation

Alcoholic drinks in Ireland will be labelled with cancer warnings under a groundbreaking law passed Wednesday, which also sets a minimum

price in a bid to tackle a "corrosive" drinking culture.

Ministers say the bill, the first in Ireland to address alcohol as a public [health](#) issue, will help save lives.

Three years after being introduced, and against strong opposition from the drinks industry, the legislation was passed by the Seanad Eireann, the upper house of parliament.

It was adopted by the lower house Dail Eireann last week, and now only requires the approval of the president, a largely symbolic move.

Health minister Simon Harris said it was a "very special day".

"Alcohol damages our health, it harms our communities, it hurts many families and the measures in this bill are designed to change that relationship," he said.

"It's about putting in place a number of measures for the first time ever in a public health perspective to try and change that corrosive culture that we currently we have with alcohol in Ireland."

Three people a day die due to [alcohol consumption](#) in Ireland, according to 2016 report by the Health Research Board, a government agency.

The bill creates a minimum unit price for alcohol and restricts advertising of drinks, including banning ads in public parks, bus stops and train stations.

It also requires warnings of the link between cancer and alcohol to be placed on product labels, as well as the number of calories.

Patricia Callan, director of the Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland,

said the bill would create "too big a barrier" for some companies to sell their products in Ireland.

She also criticised the health warnings, telling AFP: "The scientific evidence certainly doesn't warrant the direct link of alcohol and cancer."

Ministers say Ireland is the fourth heaviest-drinking nation in the OECD in terms of quantity of alcohol consumed, and ranks joint third for binge-drinking out of 194 countries in research by the World Health Organisation.

Scotland introduced a [minimum price](#) for [alcohol](#) earlier this year, while countries including Russia and Ukraine, and some Canadian states, have taken similar measures.

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