

Germany's drugs czar wants higher age limits for alcohol

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A young man stands in front of a shelf with hard liquor at a beverage market in Gelsenkirchen, western Germany, June 15, 2007. The German government's drugs czar has proposed raising the age when people can buy beer and win from 16 to 18, and cracking down on alcohol and tobacco advertising. Credit: AP

Photo/Martin Meissner, File

The German government's drugs czar has proposed raising the legal age when people can buy beer and wine from 16 to 18, and cracking down on alcohol and tobacco advertising.

Burkhard Blienert told the Welt daily in an interview published Friday that he believes there are "many medical reasons" to increase the purchase age even for lower-strength alcoholic beverages.

He was also quoted as saying that the rule allowing teens as young as 14 to drink beer, wine or champagne in the presence of their parents or guardians should be abolished.

Blienert said he favors significant restrictions on alcohol, tobacco and gambling advertising.

Conservatives expressed concern about the proposed change to the drinking age.

"When a teenager drinks his first [beer](#) with dad that's much better than getting blind drunk at a party," Tino Sorge of the opposition Union bloc told the Rheinische Post daily.

Blienert, who was appointed by the new center-left government recently, has previously suggested allowing the controlled sale of cannabis.

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