

PRESS RELEASE

On the occasion of the International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Day

The European FASD Alliance
presents

TOO YOUNG TO DRINK 2015

A communication campaign to raise awareness of the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

Today, September 9, the 9th day of the 9th month, at 9:09am, on the occasion of the **International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Day**, the **European FASD Alliance** (EUFASD) presents ***Too Young To Drink 2015***, an international communication campaign conceived by **Fabrica**, the Benetton group's communication research center, to raise awareness of the risks of **FASD** (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders), a range of problems caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol which can include birth defects, learning disorders, behavioral problems and mental illness. **FASD is 100% preventable - by avoiding alcohol during pregnancy.**

This year the campaign will involve the network created for the 2014 initiative, plus new partners who joined in 2015.

More than 65 organizations in 35 countries will promote ***Too Young To Drink***: banners and posters will show a depiction of a real newborn baby mixed with cocktail elements, in continuity with the visual used last year. To amplify the message, the action will be integrated with the use of social media and, during the day, postcards will be distributed to the public.

In addition, the **Social Contest "The Ambassadors of TYTD2015"** will be launched: the partners will be invited to involve as many people as possible by asking them to take pictures and make videos of the displayed materials. The contents will then be published in the social media using the hashtags **#TYTD2015** and **#tooyoungtodrink**.

Too Young To Drink was conceived by Cuban artist **Erik Ravelo**, responsible for Social Engagement Campaigns at **Fabrica**, a communication research center based in Italy where young creative people from all over the world develop communication projects with a message of social progress. Since its foundation in 1994, Fabrica has always had particular consideration for a social change-driven communication and was happy to accept EUFASD's request to contribute its creativity to raise awareness about not drinking alcohol during pregnancy. As Erik Ravelo affirms, "It has been a great pleasure for Fabrica to help the EUFASD Alliance in creating and conveying such a sensitive message; we hope it can reach as many people as possible, not only women but also partners, families and the society institutions. For the 2015 visual, we have worked again with the eternal concept of the unborn child who, instead of being in the mother's womb, is mixed with cocktail elements such as lime, ice

cubes and bubbles. The vibrant atmosphere and the vivid colours catch the audience's attention, visualizing what the baby can feel when the mother drinks alcohol."

The **major aims** of the *Too Young To Drink* 2015 campaign are the following:

- To raise awareness of the dangers of drinking during pregnancy among the child-bearing aged population and in the community;
- To spread accurate, research-based information on the risks of using alcohol during pregnancy;
- To empower women to make their own choices, and encourage friends, families and the society to support alcohol-free pregnancies.

"As the adoptive mother of three children with FASD, I see the daily struggles they face in school and in their social relations. I am working to prevent this ever happening to another child", says **Diane Black**, Chair of the European FASD Alliance who has been advised on the campaign by the Local Health Authority of Treviso (Veneto Region, Italy) for the social marketing and health communication strategy, based on the experience of the project "Mamma Beve Bimbo Beve."

"The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) and its affiliates across the United States have worked very hard for twenty-five years to bring FASD to the forefront of the American public. Everyone wants to think that FASD is something that affects other people," said **Kathleen Mitchell**, Vice President and Spokesperson of NOFAS and birth mother of a child with fetal alcohol syndrome. "With 40,000 babies born each year in the U.S. alone with FASD, it is critical that we as a society work together to combat what amounts to roughly one out of every 100 babies having preventable birth defects."

"FASD is an international problem and requires an international solution. So far, France is the only European country that provides a warning message on all alcoholic beverages. The European Commission is perfectly positioned to take action and support Member States in raising awareness about this problem. We hope the Commissioner for Health will move the issue quickly forward," says **Mariann Skar**, Secretary General European Alcohol Policy Alliance.

For further information:
www.tooyoungtodrink.org