

***Rudé Pravo* Alcohol and Cigarette Abuse**

[Excerpts] Prague -- The fact that, despite its moderate decline, per capita annual consumption of alcohol in Czechoslovakia amounts to 8.6 liters of pure alcohol, that every citizen smokes an average of 1,766 cigarettes a year, and that health care authorities register almost 9,000 persons addicted to non-alcoholic toxicants compels us to take effective measures. This was stated by Jiri Kudej, head of the health care department of the Office of the CSSR Government Presidium, at a news conference in Prague on Tuesday [13 September].

The existing measures aimed at gradually limiting alcoholism, other forms of addiction, and smoking are not sufficiently effective.

Draft laws of the Czech National Council and the Slovak National Council on protecting against alcoholism and other forms of addiction are now in the works. The changes under preparation will also affect the criminal code, the labor code, and the health insurance law. . . .

The draft laws on protecting against alcoholism and other forms of addiction should be discussed by the legislative bodies this year and take effect next year. It is being proposed, for example, to expressly ban the sale and serving of alcohol of every kind during public events organized for young people, during sporting events, in enterprise canteens and snack bars and shops located on the premises of organizations, and aboard public transportation, excluding railroad transportation, where only the sale of beer will be permitted. . . . There is also a proposal to stress the ban on the sale of tobacco products to children and adolescents and to ban smoking outside areas designated and reserved for this purpose.

As Jiri Kudej went on to say, the proposed amendments to the labor code contain the principle that the use of alcohol at the workplace constitutes a serious breach of one's obligations under the labor code and that violations will mean fines. Health insurance regulations are to be complemented in such a way that no sick pay is to be given to those whose illness is the direct consequence of abusing habit-forming substances, as well as to drug addicts and alcoholics who have been ordered to undergo treatment but who either frustrate this treatment or whose treatment does not show any positive effects.

Production and retailing also have their tasks. . . . This concerns, in particular, increasing the production of inexpensive nonalcoholic beverages. It has been decided, for example, that the reconstruction and construction of new operations producing bottled mineral water would be subsidized, from 1991 onwards, by a sum equivalent to 2 percent of proceeds of the turnover tax from the sale of alcoholic beverages. Given that this tax now yields Kcs17 billion annually, this will amount to significant support for the production of a higher volume and greater variety of mineral water.

Shops and catering facilities will be obliged to offer at least four to five types of inexpensive nonalcoholic beverages. It has been decided, furthermore, to limit the display of alcoholic beverages to shop windows

and on counters, to restrict imports of alcohol and cigarettes and to take other measures.

In the sphere of health care it is necessary, among other things, to expand by 30 percent the number of beds for the treatment of alcoholism and other forms of addiction. This is because one in three male patients in psychiatric wards is now an alcoholic. . . .

Source: "New Measures against Alcohol, Drug Abuse Set," September 22, 1988, *Rudé Pravo*, trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).