

Lithuania enacts ban on energy drinks for minors, in global first

November 1 2014

Lithuania on Saturday enacted a ban on selling energy drinks to anyone under 18, in what officials in the Baltic country claimed was a global first.

"It's a revolutionary development the world over: we didn't find a single other country to have this kind of [ban](#)," health ministry official Almantas Kranauskas told AFP.

"Most countries only have recommendations. We are the first."

Under the law which parliament adopted in May, selling energy drinks to minors is now punishable by a fine of up to 400 litas (116 euros, \$146).

A recent survey showed 10 percent of school-aged youth consume energy drinks at least once a week in this EU Baltic state of three million people, Kranauskas said.

He argued that high levels of taurine and caffeine found in some energy drinks could lead to hyperactivity and addiction, adding that some scientists suggest they could also be a gateway to drugs.

Maxima, the biggest supermarket chain in the three Baltic states, said it would move energy drinks to "less visible" locations and use monitoring and special banners to implement the ban.

Critics claim the problem is exaggerated and will only increase red tape.

"This solution to this non-existent problem is just a waste of time for businessmen and state institutions," Remigijus Senavaitis of the Lithuanian Free Market Institute told AFP, noting that energy drink use was much more widespread in other EU states.

Last year, the American Medical Association called for a ban on marketing energy drinks to children and teenagers.

Saudi Arabia meanwhile imposed a total ban in March on advertisements for [energy drinks](#) and prohibited their sale in educational and sports facilities and government buildings.

In October, popular energy drink-maker Red Bull settled a class-action lawsuit in the United States over false advertising.

The Austrian drink-maker agreed to pay \$13 million over claims that its drink could boost performance, concentration and reaction speed.

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