



Arūnas Dulkys
Minister of Health
Republic of Lithuania

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Minister of Health
Republic of Estonia

20 May 2024
No. 1/0524-93

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of the Baltic Assembly, we would like to express the assurances of our highest consideration to the Baltic Council of Ministers.

On 7-8 March 2024, the joint meeting of the Education, Science and Culture Committee and the Health, Welfare and Family Committee of the Baltic Assembly was held in Vilnius. Among other issues parliamentarians, government representatives and experts discussed the **gaps in the cooperation of the Baltic States in the health care sector**.

During the meeting, parliamentarians assessed the **implementation of the recommendations of the Baltic Assembly** and concluded that in several cases lack of progress can be observed. The Baltic Assembly recommended the governments of the Baltic States to create a Baltic roadmap for improving mental health in the region that includes embracing a human rights-based approach, prioritizing effective psychosocial interventions and stopping investments in segregated psychiatric institutions. The answers of the Baltic Council of Ministers received in August 2023 show that the Baltic States have implemented numerous national activities for improving mental health in the countries and there have been also joint activities that could serve as a basis for a Baltic roadmap. For this reason, we would like to receive answers to the following questions:

— What has prevented or disrupted the creation of a Baltic roadmap for improving mental health in the region?

— When such a joint plan could be expected and what are the next steps to be made?

Other recommendations discussed by the parliamentarians were 1) to jointly take stock of the horizon scanning of new medications and to create a joint waiting list of innovative medications for the Baltic States to negotiate joint procurements, and 2) to start discussions about a joint system for addressing medicine shortages in the Baltic States efficiently and timely. The governments of the Baltic States seem to have different views regarding the implementation of the said recommendations, and, therefore, we would like to kindly request the answers to the following questions:

— What is the view of the governments regarding joining other existing collaboration initiatives, such as the Beneluxa Initiative?

— What are the challenges in creating a joint waiting list of innovative medications?

— What is hindering the creation of a joint system for addressing medicine shortages in the Baltic States?

Another recommendation that lacks progress is concerned with eliminating obstacles for the Baltic States to ensure the compatibility of e-health systems and proper health data exchange. In eliminating obstacles to ensure the compatibility of e-health systems and proper health data exchange, the Baltic States have

different views, however, the Committee wants to emphasize the importance of trilateral initiatives and highlight the Baltic potential to overtake the EU in digital connectivity.

Following the discussions, the Committees have also agreed on **new proposals** to the Baltic governments for improving the cooperation of the Baltic States and beyond. They are as follows:

- to secure the funding necessary for the implementation of a full-scale feasibility study of the joint initiative of the CERN Baltic Group and CERN on Advanced Particle Therapy Center for the Baltic States;
- to explore an initiative of creating an innovative medicines fund for funding and improving access to novel therapies in the Baltic States;
- based on the renewed Partnership Agreement between the Baltic States on Joint Procurements of Medicinal Products and Medical Devices, to agree on new objects for joint procurements;
- to jointly evaluate the impact of the proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use and establishing rules governing the European Medicines Agency on the Baltic States;
- to task the Lithuanian State Medicines Control Agency, the Latvian State Agency of Medicines and the Estonian State Agency of Medicines to resume publishing the Baltic Statistics on Medicines for promoting active exchange of information and more coordinated policy planning in the Baltic States.

We would highly appreciate receiving clear and detailed answers to the aforementioned questions and other reflections by **20 June 2024**.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Chair of the
Health, Welfare and Family
Committee



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