

**JOINT LETTER  
OF THE NORTHERN DIMENSION PARTNERSHIP IN PUBLIC HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING (NDPHS)  
ON STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION  
TO REDUCE ALCOHOL RELATED HARM**

TO:

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Director-General  
Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)  
European Commission

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CC:

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Dear Director General,

Being the members of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)<sup>1</sup> we wish to bring to your attention the *need of two instruments aiming to improve international cooperation in field of alcohol and related harm.*

Use of alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco and other psychoactive substances are some of the leading causes of disability and premature death in Europe. Substance use-related harm costs billions of euros to health systems and societies every year. There has been little or no progress in reducing alcohol consumption and harm in Europe, according to the World Health Organization, and Europe remains the region with the highest alcohol consumption levels in the world (WHO)<sup>2</sup>.

Evidence-based policies, programs and practices can effectively reduce harm caused by alcohol, a major risk factor of cancer and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Effective international cooperation among European countries, along with partnerships with leading international organizations such as the WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer, is crucial. By sharing the latest research findings, professional knowledge, best practices and lessons learnt, these coordinated efforts can address alcohol-related harm across Europe and contribute to the implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer plan. To strengthen international cooperation and address the lack of a dedicated EU-level platform for sharing expert alcohol-related knowledge and practice, we *invite to consider establishing an Alcohol Expert Group or similar platform at the EU level and encourage DG SANTE to take the lead in this initiative.*

<sup>1</sup> Thematic areas - NDPHS

<sup>2</sup> Adults in the European Region consume on average 9.2 litres of pure alcohol every year – making them the heaviest drinkers in the world

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the European Commission for funding the WHO Regional Office for Europe in support of the WHO-EU Evidence into Action Alcohol Project (EVID-ACTION). This funding enables the promotion and implementation of evidence-based alcohol policies for communities across the EU, Iceland, Norway, and Ukraine. Having in mind promising results of the EVID-ACTION Project and need for the future initiatives expressed by the participating countries, *we would like to express the need for continuation of the EVID-ACTION Project, asking DG SANTE for cooperation and taking necessary planning actions in this regard.*

The above-mentioned international cooperation instruments, both EU Alcohol Expert Group and continued EVID-ACTION Project would significantly contribute to effective policy development and partnership building, supporting the EU in meeting global alcohol reduction targets and fostering a healthier and wealthier Europe.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia  
Secretary General

Maarjo Mändmaa



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MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia  
State Secretary

Agnese Vaļulīne



Ministry of Health  
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Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania  
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Norwegian Ministry  
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