

The monopoly system is an important corner-stone of Iceland's effective alcohol policy

Resolution adopted by NordAN's annual assembly of representatives held in Helsinki, October 23rd 2015

The Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network (NordAN), strongly urges members of the Icelandic Parliament, Alþingi, to veto the bill proposing the abolition of a public monopoly on sales of alcohol and authorizing the right to sell alcohol at all retail outlets which is now being dealt with by the Parliament.

The annual meeting encourages the members of the Parliament to safeguard one of the most known effective preventive measure in alcohol policy, a public monopoly on sales of alcohol.

The annual meeting draws the attention of the members of the Parliament to the important fact that alcohol is no ordinary commodity and legislation and policy must take this into account.

Studies clearly show that restrictions on availability is among the most effective measures to prevent alcohol problems. State alcohol monopolies, high age limit for purchasing alcohol, high alcohol prices, alcohol advertising ban and active measures against drink-driving are measures highly recommended by the World Health Organization. The proposal would likely increase the number of alcohol outlets in Iceland by 300-400 percent, from 49 to between 150-200. Adoption of the proposal goes against all findings and principles of public health policies which aim to safeguard and improve the health of citizens and may lead to increased alcohol related harm.

The current alcohol policy in Iceland has generated obvious benefits as can, among other things, be seen by the very positive situation regarding alcohol and drugs amongst children and youth in Iceland and the fact that the total consumption of alcohol in Iceland is among the lowest in Europe.

We point out that many countries look to Iceland as a model for successful alcohol policy.

Surveys show a general consensus on the current alcohol policy among Icelanders, including the Icelandic alcohol and tobacco monopoly ÁTVR.

Helsinki, Finland
October 23, 2015