

Stockholm, July 17, 2017

To ministers of health and social affairs of EU Members States

We want to thank the Estonian EU presidency for setting cross-border challenges in reducing harmful alcohol use as one of the priorities in the health area.

As you all well know alcohol related harm causes not only health but also social and economic costs in our countries, reducing stability, competitiveness and sustainability of our region. These are avoidable costs and while alcohol policy is mainly the responsibility of each Member State, our common market does create situations where we need EU wide solutions and interventions.

Alcohol has been an issue of controversy in Europe. Since 2012, when EU Alcohol Strategy ended, we have witnessed lack of leadership from the European Commission. Members States, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions and obviously a wide network of NGO-s have all demanded a continuation of EU Alcohol Strategy and a strong focus on reducing alcohol related harm. To our regret actual action has not followed.

We can only agree with the Estonian presidency's decision to focus on „cross-border challenges in reducing alcohol-related harm, which can only be solved by common initiatives of Member States (bilaterally, regionally, across the EU).“

We wish you determination and acumen in dealing with the issue on July 21 when you gather to Tallinn for an informal meeting of health ministers. We ask you to set public health over any economic interests that might compete against effective alcohol policies and regulations. And we want to assure that while doing that you have a strong civil society support behind you.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Allebeck,
president, NordAN

Lauri Beekmann
Executive Director, NordAN

NORDAN was established in September 2000 as a network of non governmental, voluntary organizations who all worked to reduce the consumption of alcohol and other drugs and who supported a restrictive alcohol and drug policy and who did not receive contributions from the commercial alcohol industry. Acting on these principles NordAN today have grown to have 90 non-governmental, voluntary member organisations in all the eight Nordic and Baltic countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden), all active in the alcohol and drug field.