

Stockholm, April 1, 2019



To Norway Ministry of Finance
To Mr Sivert Bjørnstad, member of The Standing Committee on Finance and Economical Affairs
To Mr Tore Storehaug, member of The Standing Committee on Finance and Economical Affairs

Concerning Norwegian Government Pension Fund

Recent media coverage has brought to our attention that the Norwegian Government Pension Fund has invested close to 1.4 billion NOK in five companies with significant activities related to marijuana production.

As an international network of Nordic and Baltic alcohol and drug policy organisations, we are writing to express our concern and urge you to rethink that investment and overall policy of investing in harmful psychoactive substances.

It is our understanding that the practice you have chosen goes against the UN International Drug Control Conventions and undermines society's efforts to prevent drug abuse.

Although cannabis has been legalized in Canada, the International Drug Conventions prohibit the production, trafficking and sale of cannabis for recreational purposes. The International Narcotics Control Board has stated that:

“The legalisation by Canada of cannabis for non-medical purposes is incompatible with the legal obligations incumbent on States Parties under the international drug control framework and is a violation of fundamental provisions of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, according to which State Parties have undertaken to limit the production, manufacture, export, import, distribution of, trade in, use and possession of drugs exclusively to medical and scientific purposes.”

We support the position of our national member organisation, Actis - Rusfeltets samarbeidsorgan, that it is not appropriate to invest public funds in companies related to recreational marijuana.

We also fully support concerns of the Norwegian Narcotics Officers Union (Norsk Narkotikapolitiforening) that investments in the cannabis industry undermine their professional duties. First, the Fund seeks to profit from activities that are punishable offenses in Norway. Second, we already see that the cannabis industry uses their financial muscle to influence global cannabis policies.

We commend you for excluding producers of tobacco from your fund for ethical reasons, but it is crucial to emphasize that like tobacco, cannabis products are also addictive and harmful. In addition to similar ethical problems, this decision could undermine the work of the police and society to prevent and limit the use of illicit and harmful substances.

It is also worth noting that the alcohol and tobacco industries have made significant investments in the cannabis industry, and that a further merging of these “addiction industries” is expected in the future. This raises new ethical issues for investments in a range of companies.

Norway is a signatory to the UN Drug Control Conventions and has long been a champion of public

health globally. We urge the Government Pension Fund to continue to uphold the principles of the UN drug conventions and reconsider the ethical implications of investments in companies that trade in a product that is illicit, harmful and addictive.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Allebeck, president, NordAN

NordAN board members:
Anne Babb, *International Blue Cross*
Representing Faroe Islands

Christian Bjerre, *Blue Cross Denmark*
Representing Denmark

Sven-Olov Carlsson, *Swedish National Council on Alcohol and Drugs*
Representing Sweden

Árni Einarsson, *Information Center on Alcohol and Drug Prevention*
Representing Iceland

Nijole Gostautaite Midttun, *Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition*
Representing Lithuania

Andrus Lipand, *Estonian Coalition for Tobacco and Alcohol Control*
Representing Estonia

Juha Mikkonen, *EHYT Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention*
Representing Finland

Stig Erik Sørheim, *Actis – Norwegian Policy Network on Alcohol and Drugs*
Representing Norway

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 80 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.