



Brussels 09.12.2016

Dear Mr Jüri Ratas, Prime Minister of Estonia

Mr Jevgeni Ossinovski, Minister of Health and Labour

Support for Estonia's brave move forward to protect the population against alcohol related harm

I am writing to you on behalf of the European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare), which is an alliance of 60 public health organisations (mainly non-governmental organisations) from 25 European countries dedicated to the prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm.

Eurocare would like to congratulate Estonia for taking the lead and prioritising health of its citizens. The alcohol policy plans that Estonia is proposing are based on recognised international agreements. Reducing youth drinking and alcohol-related road accidents are both in line with UN's sustainable development goals. Both WHO's Global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol and WHO European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2012–2020 recommends Member States "to reduce exposure to alcohol marketing, and in particular to protect children and youth from alcohol marketing of all kinds".

Especially now when the European Commission has decided not to renew its alcohol strategy, it is important that Member States fulfil their obligation to tackle alcohol related problems.

As alcohol policy often contradicts with the interests of different industries and businesses it is important to state that for any country or government, the well-being and health of people should come before profit of private companies. Actions on alcohol as a risk factor will address chronic disease, ill health and premature death as well as reduce inequalities and create future savings for health systems.

Over the years, Baltic countries have shown particularly high alcohol related harm figures with alarming alcohol related injury numbers. Courageous and decisive actions are needed to reduce these harms. Eurocare commends the Estonian government for these efforts and urges to adopt the proposed plans. We look forward to continued good collaboration with Estonia during the Estonian Presidency Conference in Tallinn and in Brussels during the Alcohol Awareness Week in November 2017.

Kind regards,

Tiziana Codenotti

President of Eurocare

Mariann Skar

Secretary General

