

NordAN resolution

*Adopted by NordAN General
Assembly, November 18, 2020*



Alcohol - a risk factor for cancer

Drinking alcohol raises the risk of cancers of the mouth and throat, larynx (voice box), esophagus, colon and rectum, liver, and breast (in women). Based on that knowledge [European Code against Cancer](#) states that “If you drink alcohol of any type, limit your intake. Not drinking alcohol is better for cancer prevention.”

But according to available national surveys and studies, most of our citizens are not aware of the fact that alcohol causes cancer. Evidence shows that only 20-40% of people are aware of that link.

NordAN points out that it would be a mistake to consider it a well-known fact and that people are making informed choices when it comes to alcohol use and health risks. People do not know. Our countries are not doing enough to inform them. Not only are people not always well informed, but some are also actually misinformed. There is [evidence](#) that the alcohol industry sometimes misrepresents or downplays evidence about the alcohol-related risk of cancer. That puts a special responsibility on our governments to react to the alcohol industry’s misleading role and to make sure that consumers are aware of the carcinogenic risks of alcohol.

Alcohol’s carcinogenic effect should be a much stronger argument in our national and international alcohol policy discussions. Alcohol use is one of the most important preventable risk factors for cancer, along with tobacco use and excess body weight. We should all acknowledge it as such.

We urge our governments to guarantee that this information goes further than official documents, statements and strategies that rarely reach ordinary people. It is crucial that this information reaches actual consumers of these products as well as the wider population. We ask our governments to consider introducing labelling laws, start information campaigns that would reach different social groups and support it with strong evidence-based alcohol policies. Our governments should support cancer societies, and other civil society organizations focused on evidence-based alcohol policies and preventing alcohol-related harms.

NORDAN was established in September 2000 as a network of non-governmental, voluntary organisations 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 has grown to have 74 non-governmental, voluntary member organisations in all of the Nordic and Baltic countries, all active in the alcohol and drug field.