

Countering vested interests in global alcohol policy: Ensuring transparency and accountability in decision-making



The Nordic and Baltic countries have made important strides in implementing public health-focused alcohol policies. However, there have also been steps taken that raise concerns about the direction of these policies. At the international level, interactions between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the alcohol industry have posed concerns, as they create a conflict of interest that undermines efforts to maintain transparent and health-driven alcohol policies. While these global influences may not have directly compromised national policies, they are a growing concern in shaping the international landscape of alcohol regulation.

Much like the tobacco industry before it, the alcohol industry seeks to promote its commercial interests in spaces meant to safeguard public health. These engagements not only present a clear conflict of interest but also risk weakening the effectiveness of policies designed to reduce alcohol-related harm.

This resolution calls on Nordic and Baltic governments to play a leading role in safeguarding the transparency and accountability of global alcohol policy and ensuring that it remains firmly rooted in public health priorities.

We urge Nordic and Baltic governments to:

- 1. Demand transparency** in all interactions between the WHO and the alcohol industry, ensuring that such meetings are fully documented and made publicly available to prevent undue influence on policy decisions.
- 2. Promote health-first policies**, drawing on lessons from the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which successfully excluded the tobacco industry from health policy discussions. A similar approach should be applied to the alcohol industry to ensure policy remains independent and unbiased.
- 3. Support health-targeting policies** that contribute to long-term economic well-being. Governments should resist the temptation to cut costs in prevention and in supporting civil society organisations, recognizing that investment in these areas strengthens both public health and the economy in the long run.
- 4. Lead by example** by promoting transparent and independent decision-making in alcohol policy at both the national and international levels. This includes ensuring that commercial interests do not influence policy processes and maintaining a strong commitment to evidence-based public health measures.

NordAN recognizes the crucial role that the Nordic and Baltic countries play in influencing global alcohol policy. By standing together in defense of transparency and accountability, these countries can ensure that health policies remain focused on protecting public well-being rather than serving commercial interests.