

Towards more comparable alcohol data in the Nordic and Baltic countries

Adopted by the NordAN General Assembly | 8 October 2026 | Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

Reliable data is essential for understanding alcohol consumption, alcohol-related harm and the effects of alcohol policy. However, alcohol data from Nordic and Baltic countries are often difficult to compare, not to mention with the wider Europe and the world.

Countries use different definitions, data sources and calculation methods. For example, total consumption may be estimated using surveys or sales data, legal sales may exclude unrecorded or cross-border purchases, and age-specific data may be collected or reported differently. This applies not only to estimates of alcohol consumption, but also to alcohol-related deaths, hospitalisations and other harms. In some countries, important information is incomplete, published irregularly or not available at all.

As a result, differences between countries may reflect differences in methodology rather than real differences in consumption or harm. This makes it harder to identify trends, evaluate policies, learn from one another and communicate the scale of alcohol-related problems accurately.

NordAN calls on Nordic and Baltic governments, statistical authorities, public health institutions and relevant regional bodies to:

- improve the availability and regular publication of alcohol-related data;
- make definitions and calculation methods clear and transparent;
- strengthen cooperation and the comparability of key indicators across countries;
- and work towards more consistent methods for measuring alcohol consumption, deaths and other alcohol-related harms.

Better and more comparable data would support stronger research, more informed public debate and more effective alcohol policy across the Nordic and Baltic region.