

Protect the Nordic alcohol control policy: sustainable approach to public health



For decades, Nordic countries have led the way in alcohol control policies that prioritize public health, safety and societal well-being. High taxes, strict advertising bans, and state controlled alcohol retail monopolies are the cornerstones of this approach. These measures have successfully reduced alcohol consumption and mitigated its burden on society.

The policy is founded on a significant idea: alcohol is not an ordinary commodity. To control the implicit harms of alcohol consumption to individuals and communities its availability and promotion must be regulated. Evidence-based policymaking which has reduced alcohol harm, delivered healthier and safer societies in the Nordics, is gradually and successfully adopted in the Baltic region as well.

Now, recent policy shifts in Nordic countries and mounting pressure for liberalization threaten to undermine and dismantle these achievements. Retail monopolies are being challenged, alcohol taxes are under scrutiny and trail behind inflation, advertising restrictions are relaxed. All this with little to no consultations, disregarding protests and opinion of the civil society. These changes are then justified by politicians claiming protection of commercial and economic interests, yet neglecting the long-standing public health goals that have driven the Nordic alcohol policy. This resolution seeks to validate the enduring value and goals of the Nordic alcohol policy, warn Nordic governments and societies of the harm, if these measures are weakened and to demand protection for sustainable public health, by preventing substantial harm from alcohol.

This resolution reaffirms the urgency of safeguarding the core values of Nordic alcohol policy: public health and social responsibility over commercial interests. The reasons for implementing the Nordic alcohol policy have not disappeared.

This resolution demands action to uphold and strengthen the foundation of Nordic alcohol policy:

1. **Stand firm and uphold** the value of high taxes, advertising bans, and retail monopolies as essential tools for reducing alcohol-related harm.
2. **Reject the pressures to liberalize** alcohol markets and dismantle policies that prioritize public health over commercial interests.
3. **Educate and engage** the public on the vital benefits of traditional Nordic alcohol policy, ensuring that future generations recognize the importance of these controls for public health.

The Nordic countries have been united in this approach for years, and the principles behind it remain as vital today as ever. These measures must not only be defended but strengthened to shield future generations from the harms of alcohol.