

Box 128 25
SE-111 50 Stockholm
Sweden

T: +46 721 555 036
info@iogt.org
www.iogt.org

To:
**68 Regional Committee Meeting
WHO EURO**

**September 17 to 20, 2018
Rome, Italy**

**IOGT International Written Statement to
WHO EURO 68 Regional Committee Meeting**

05.09.18

Agenda item: 5b) Implementation of the roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda

With more than 150 Member Organizations from more than 60 countries, **IOGT International is the premier global network for evidence-based policy solutions and community-based interventions** to prevent and reduce alcohol harm. Our members work from a Human Rights-based approach with all aspects of alcohol-related harm: protecting the rights of children from families with alcohol problems; preventing early onset of alcohol use in adolescence; providing treatment, rehabilitation and social inclusion programs for anyone affected by alcohol use disorders, exposing the unethical practices of the alcohol industry, conducting prevention work for and with young people, as well as advocacy work to mainstream alcohol policy solutions into all relevant policy areas.

IOGT International and our members in the WHO Europe region commend the Secretariat and the Regional Director for inspiring and much needed work on promoting evidence-based solutions to the high burden that alcohol poses on countries in our Region.

Alcohol is not only a major risk factor for NCDs, infectious diseases like TB and HIV/ AIDS, violence, or road traffic fatalities; it's also a major obstacle to development, **adversely affecting 13 of 17 Sustainable Development Goals** in all three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

The Regional Director's report explains that alcohol consumption in the Region fell by 11% between 1990 and 2014, although with huge differences between countries, the historically high level of consumption in Europe was **still associated with substantial attributable mortality, which increased by 4%. And**

yet, for alcohol, only 13% of Member States fully implemented pricing policies, such as excise tax increases, on alcoholic beverages in 2017.

This shows that the **implementation of cost-effective, high-impact and evidence-based best buy policy solutions is still inadequate.** And for that people, families, communities, and societies are paying a high price.

Therefore, we **call for renewed commitment by Member States and WHO Europe to make alcohol policy solutions the priority they should be.** IOGT International strongly supports Member States in the Region that have repeatedly called for more action on population-level responses to prevent and reduce alcohol harm.

We urge you to include alcohol policy best buy measures in the deliberations and outcome documents of the forthcoming UN General Assembly High-Level Meetings on Tuberculosis and Non-Communicable Diseases – commensurate with the harm caused by alcohol.

In the era of the Agenda 2030, implementation of **alcohol policy best buy measures must be understood** not only as high-impact and evidence-based tools to promote health and well-being, but **as tools that help achieve SDGs beyond health**, such as reduced inequalities, increased gender equality, improved public spaces and sustainable cities and economic productivity and progress.

Evidence shows that a \$1 Dollar investment in the alcohol policy best buys generates a return of more than \$9 Dollars. All this means that alcohol harm and policy solutions are not a fringe issue; considering and analyzing the impact of alcohol harm as cross-cutting risk factor in major health issues facing the WHO

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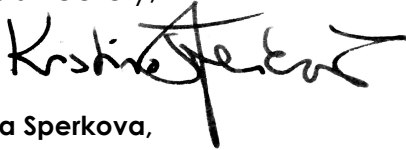
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Europe Region is crucial and formulating and implementing evidence-based measures is a significant contribution to achieving the SDGs.

In these joint and hopefully long-term efforts, IOGT International and our members remain committed to support Member States and WHO.

Yours sincerely,



**Kristina Sperkova,
International President**

**IOGT International,
Stockholm, Sweden**

September 5, 2018