

Utrecht, December 13th 2021

To the parliament members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

Letter about the proposed changes to Alcohol Control Law that we have been alerted by the Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition.

The European Center for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing (EUCAM) would like to express its concern about the possible relaxation of your existing alcohol policy, enshrined in the Lithuanian Alcohol Control Law.

I would like to say without exaggeration that Lithuania is often referred to as one of the European model countries because of its effective alcohol policy in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO). It will therefore come as no surprise that EUCAM is concerned about the proposed changes of the current Alcohol Control Law, especially with regard to digital alcohol marketing.

EUCAM is a European network organization of scientists and NGO's, aimed at stimulating and communicating research into the impact of alcohol marketing on the drinking behavior of minors and vulnerable groups of adults. For these risk groups it is of great importance that both the availability of alcohol is limited and that the advertising of alcohol is regulated by law.

EUCAM is currently coordinating a study commissioned by the European Commission into the impact of digital alcohol marketing and the effectiveness of digital alcohol marketing regulations. The positive experiences of Lithuania are systematically included in this research.

It will not surprise you that the alcohol industry worldwide makes optimal use of the many possibilities of marketing via social media, whereby also minors are reached and encouraged to experiment with alcohol through the use of paid so-called influencers, often with the option to order it online. Parents and adults in general are often not aware of this. Several scientific studies shows that the alcohol producers' claim that digital alcohol advertising does not target minors is false.

It is very understandable that there are also forces in your country to soften alcohol policy. All governments have to deal with the active lobbying of alcohol producers, supermarkets and the catering industry. However, your government has chosen to properly balance the interests of public health against these economic interests. Alcohol remains sufficiently available in Lithuania for adult drinkers. And for this reason your government receives respect from other governments, from many alcohol scientists and from EUCAM.

In practical terms, your current alcohol policy means fewer alcohol-related deaths, fewer accidents, a safer home situation for children and an enormous cost savings for society.

We therefore rely on Lithuania's current effective alcohol policy to be maintained.



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