

To whom it may concern,

My name is Lucas Nilsson and I am the president of the Swedish organisation IOGT-NTO. IOGT-NTO is the largest temperance organisation, and one of the largest public health organisations, in Sweden. It is also one of the country's oldest NGOs with a long tradition of cultural, social and educational efforts in local communities. IOGT-NTO has long-standing expertise on questions regarding alcohol policy and reducing alcohol-related harm.

I am writing to you to express **serious concern** about the suggested changes to the alcohol law of Lithuania. The proposed changes will **severely weaken the fundamental public health role** this law plays in protecting and preventing Lithuanian citizens from alcohol-related harm. This is greatly concerning, especially in the midst of a global pandemic where public health is already under severe pressure.

Internationally, and especially in Europe, **the Lithuanian alcohol law serves as a role model** on how to propose and implement effective legislation in line with the three best buys of the WHO and the SAFER initiative. Many European countries today look to Lithuania for inspiration. This is especially true regarding the efficiency the marketing ban has had and is **generally regarded, among experts, as the current best practice in the region.**

Further, it is clear the current legislation has **had a significant positive effect on decreasing both alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm** in Lithuania with the total consumption decreasing from 14 litres per capita in 2015 to 11.1 litres in 2019. This is an impressive achievement.

Changing the law and removing many of these key aspects will likely have considerable negative consequences on both alcohol consumption and public health. In a situation where the healthcare services already are strained it would be irresponsible to adopt measures that would worsen this situation.

With this in mind, **I hope you reconsider the upcoming changes to the alcohol law.** This is not a time to disregard best practices advocated by both science and the WHO and to implement measures that will both increase alcohol-related harm and overall societal costs. Instead, protect the functioning, evidence-based, alcohol policy that you currently have. It saves lives.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucas Nilsson', written in a cursive style.

Lucas Nilsson

President, IOGT-NTO