

Lithuanian Youth Manifesto on Alcohol

The representatives of APYN in Lithuania are deeply concerned that according to WHO Global status report on alcohol and health a statistical Lithuanian in 2016 consumed 15,0 litres of pure alcohol. If we desire to live as good as Western or Northern Europe, we have to take measures to lower our alcohol consumption at least to the average amount in Europe which is 9,8 litres per capita. Taking into consideration that during the time period of 2010-2016 alcohol consumption in Lithuania has decreased by 0.1l, we would like to thank all the stakeholders, especially the Ministry of Health of Lithuania, for the implementation of the new alcohol policy. We do recognize that a positive transition is happening, but not as fast as we want it to. To exemplify, this amount of alcohol consumption stunts our economic growth, amounting to €250 million damages to GDP. As stated by the National Research Council of USA, alcohol related harm is linked with poor emotional and physical health, hindered school attendance, family withdrawal, negative changes in social behaviour and disengagement from activities (Consensus study report “Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility”).

As an active advocate for effective alcohol policy the Alcohol Policy Youth Network believes that all European countries should do everything in their power to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm and calls upon the governments to implement measures, which will be in line with WHO’s alcohol policy best buys.

The APYN feels that when implementing new legislative actions, a dialogue with civil society is crucial for an effective process. It also encourages all stakeholders to include young people and youth organizations in a structured dialogue in order to transmit governmental directives into the language of young people.

The Alcohol Policy Youth Network calls upon the Ministry of Health of Republic of Lithuania to acknowledge the following suggestions about alcohol related issues proposed by youth.

1. Passports or ID cards should be checked before selling alcohol.

A lot of employers still have not implemented proper measures for the enforcement of this law, therefore the current law is not as effective as it should be. Even though, Systematic

Lithuanian Youth Manifesto on Alcohol

mystery shopping has not been done in Lithuania, this process has to be regulated by the state and retailers have to be informed about the consequences of not complying to the existing law. This method would help determine the current conformity to the legal code.

2. The complete ban of alcohol advertisements is an effective mean to reduce alcohol consumption.

Traditional media is already regulated but new media channels are not. We recognise that it is hard to keep track of all the media. However, we should start looking for possible solutions. Alcohol advertising influences young people's behaviour, normalises drinking, brings about positive beliefs about drinking and encourages young people to drink sooner and in greater quantities¹. Therefore, the ban of advertisements has a positive impact on adolescents

3. Increase funding for prevention programs and projects and ensure that prevention programs in schools are evidence-based, attractive to youth and accessible for the majority of the population.

Evidence suggest that school-based interventions have an effect on awareness about alcohol among adolescents. Educational practices should be proven to be effective and focused on specific elements that lead to preventing alcohol use².

¹ Peter Anderson Avalon de Bruijn Kathryn Angus Ross Gordon Gerard Hastings Alcohol and Alcoholism, Volume 44, Issue 3, 1 May 2009, Pages 229–243 (2009) <https://academic.oup.com/alcalc/article/44/3/229/178279>

² Henriette Kyrrestad Strøm, Frode Adolfsen, Sturla Fossum, Sabine Kaiser and Monica Martinussen, "Effectiveness of school-based preventive interventions on adolescent alcohol use: a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials" Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy (2014) <https://substanceabusepolicy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1747-597X-9-48>

Lithuanian Youth Manifesto on Alcohol

4. Encourage youth activity (sports, after school activities, events etc.)

Youth activities are linked with better self-esteem, higher confidence level and better mental health³. It is also an effective mean of making meaningful friendships. Furthermore, adults involved in the youth activities might become mentors for adolescents and have a positive impact on their development and health⁴.

5. Employers should encourage healthy lifestyle and alcohol-free behaviour at the workplace.

Taking part in any health promotion activity at work is voluntary. However, living healthy is always primarily in your own interest. Nevertheless, the employer should encourage employees to improve or begin healthy lifestyle by improving the way the work is organised, providing flexible schedules or a possibility to work from home, also offering healthy snacks and drinks at the office and doing moderate physical exercise for at least 30 minutes a day as well as promoting personal development courses⁵⁶.

6. Teachers and school administration workers should react to alcohol use in school's environment and discuss incidents with children and their parents.

Teachers and social educators in schools must help every child that is abusing psychoactive substances; provide consultations and find out the problems and causes of substance abuse. Most often, a specialist counselling must be provided in the forms of group activity or private meetings with the child in harm.

The Lithuanian Youth Manifesto on Alcohol is also available online at www.apyn.org.

³ World Health Organisation "Physical activity and young people" https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_young_people/en/

⁴ Gillian Street, Ray James, "The relationship between organised recreational activity and mental health" (2017) <https://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/support-and-advice/research-and-policies/organised-recreational-activity-and-mental-health#site-top>

⁵ World Health Organisation "Be the Change" http://www.searo.who.int/entity/healthpromotion/guide-be-the-change_combined-clean-nhd-mb.pdf?ua=1

⁶ Europos darbuotojų saugos ir sveikatos agentūros metinės ataskaitos santrauka (2017) https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Annual%20report%202017%20summary_L_T.pdf