

Turning the tide of alcohol-related harm

LITHUANIA

EPW core priorities and flagships

Promoting health and well-being

WHO collaboration

Technical guidance
Partnership between the Regional Office and Country Office

Over the past two decades, Lithuania has grappled with a severe alcohol consumption crisis, marked by some of the highest alcohol-attributable death rates in Europe. In response, Lithuania began implementing alcohol control measures in 2007, aligning with WHO's best-buy policies including higher excise taxes, restricted alcohol marketing hours, and a minimum legal drinking age of 20 rather than 18 years of age. These measures significantly reduced alcohol consumption and related harms.

The Regional Office provided crucial data on alcohol consumption and related diseases, facilitating evidence-based policy adjustments. Training workshops and events uniting governmental stakeholders to share experiences and current evidence have played a major role in maintaining strict alcohol control measures against industry pressures and political challenges.

The impact

Since adopting WHO's best-buy policies, Lithuania saw a 20% reduction in alcohol-attributable deaths by 2016, record-low alcohol consumption by 2023, and increased budget revenues from higher excise taxes. Public support for alcohol control measures surged, contributing to decreases in alcohol-related cancers, liver cirrhosis and drink-driving incidents.

Lessons learned

- Continuous stakeholder cooperation is essential for sustaining progress in alcohol control.
- Evidence-based policy interventions can effectively reduce alcohol-related harm.
- Public support and advocacy are crucial for the successful roll-out and maintenance of alcohol control policies.

Donors and partners

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences; Ministry of Health; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism



European Region



Lithuania is implementing WHO's best-buy alcohol policies to address alcohol consumption and its public health effects.
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“The data clearly show a mirror effect. As we implemented stronger alcohol control policies, alcohol-related deaths decreased significantly.”

Professor Mindaugas Štelemėkas, Head of the Health Research Institute, Lithuania

What's next?

Lithuania plans to maintain and strengthen its existing alcohol control measures, focusing on continuous monitoring and enforcement to ensure their effectiveness. The Government also aims to address new challenges, such as the increasing use of electronic cigarettes, by applying successful strategies from alcohol control initiatives.