

72nd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

Statement of the Slovak Republic

Item 10 - European framework for action on alcohol 2022–2025

Madam President,

Regional Director,

Excellencies and colleagues,

Slovakia would like to thank the Secretariat for important strategic document - the European Framework for Action on Alcohol 2022-2025, whose adoption we fully support. We welcome its strategic priorities for evidence-based action on alcohol policy, pricing, availability, marketing, health information labeling, health service response and community action.

Also, we appreciate the Resolution and we would like to announce our interest to be included in the list of cosponsors.

We would like to use not commonly used optic on the alcohol impact. The alcohol consumption represents one of the main risk factors for non-communicable diseases with a serious impact on public health and as the research has proved the co-dependent members of the affected families are the most exposed to secondary harms of alcohol use, which is mainly weakening their mental health. The research confirmed as well that the consequences of domestic violence, vulnerability and linkage to the increased health-risks related to diverse social determinants of health but also negative behavioral impact are drivers for alcohol consumption among youth and currently also among populations experiencing war-related humanitarian crisis facing serious psychosocial trauma. The lack of successful implementation of the evidence-based interventions and protective networks among these affected groups and also in the general population living with pre-existing risk factors - personal or environmental is crucial in driving the negative impact on NCDs in the region. Therefore, we need to adopt on the national and regional level such legislative acts and action plans, which will help to protect vulnerable individuals in any traumatic incident affecting wellbeing of users of the alcohol, members of affected families or communities for worsening their health in short or long-term. We have to keep in mind that prolongation or complex traumatic incidents related to violence, abuse, weakened mental health, nutrition, low patient safety, self-esteem and dignity of affected persons are factors having the ability to initiate process of pathways for any NCD acceleration, psycho-somatic conditions and social isolation on individual level affecting whole society.

Based on the Global Strategy, Slovakia has adopted a National Action Plan for Alcohol until 2030, which mainly aims at increasing health awareness, health literacy and emphasizes the multi-sectoral character of alcohol-policies. Immediate approval of the legislation ensuring the direct access of taxation by ministry of health and other stakeholders leading all types of preventive programs is crucial for their sustainability and continuous improvement.

For positive adoption in the region, we recognize the need to establish stronger and vital consortium and focal point networks with actions taken based on the research, behavior and impact measures at all levels and prevent neglecting the harms and vulnerability caused by this complex issue.

I thank you.