

**PROJECT “DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CAPACITIES TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE HEALTH INEQUALITIES“
No. NOR-LT11-SAM-01-TF-02-001**

Sub-activity 1.1.1.6 “Preparation, issuance and distribution of recommendation for evaluation and reduction of health inequalities“

Recommendations for the reduction of the inequalities of the alcohol consumption

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In accordance with the data of the Department of Statistics of the Republic of Lithuania, the upward trend in the consumption of the absolute alcohol per capita in the ten-year period is observed in Lithuania. In respect of the quantity of the absolute alcohol consumed per person older than 15 years old, Lithuania highly exceeds the average of the European Union. The results of the researches carried out in Lithuania showed the inequalities in the alcohol consumption by population, determined by the demographic (gender, age), social and economic (social status, place of residence) factors. It is recommended to apply evidence based interventions for the reduction of the inequalities of the alcohol consumption at the national and local (municipal) level. In order to reduce the harm caused by the alcohol consumption, different combinations of interventions, covering all groups of society, should be applied. The recommendations are prepared in accordance with the evidence provided in the databases of systematic reviews of the World Health Organization, NICE and Cochrane, the application of which allows reducing the consumption of alcoholic beverages and its harm at the national and local (municipal) level.

I. The recommendations of the national level

- 1. The reduction of the availability of alcoholic beverages.** It is recommended to introduce the alcoholic beverage licensing system for the retail trade, to regulate the number and density of the stores of alcoholic beverages. To sell alcoholic beverages only in the specialized stores.
- 2. The regulation of the alcoholic beverage marketing.** It is recommended to regulate content and scope of the alcoholic beverage marketing, by focusing on news forms of advertising – social networks, mobile applications and Internet portals. To restrict or prohibit the alcoholic beverage advertising in the events intended for the youth. To evaluate the potential costs and benefits to society of the complete prohibition of the alcoholic beverage advertising.

- 3. The regulation of the alcoholic beverage prices.** It is recommended to determine the minimum price per unit of alcohol, according to the social, economic and health-related harm caused by alcohol and the price effect on the alcohol consumption.
- 4. The strengthening of the drink driving control.** It is recommended to reduce the permissible amount of alcohol in the blood. To strengthen this intervention by the introduction of the sobriety check posts, often carry out the random driver breath testing. To strengthen the penalties (for example, withdrawal of driving license, financial penalty).
- 5. The improvement of monitoring and supervision.** It is recommended to collect and provide all available data on the consumption of alcoholic beverages in a single report, including the harm caused by their consumption, the social costs and political response. To create and maintain at the country level the database of the indicators adopted at the international level.
- 6. The reduction of the consequences of the negative alcohol consumption and alcohol intoxication.** In order to reduce the consequences of violence and destructive behavior, it is recommended to regulate the sale of alcoholic beverages in plastic and hardened glass containers, especially in the large scale public events. To provide the necessary assistance and support for people with alcohol intoxication. To train the personnel working in the certain sectors on how to carry out the prevention of the alcohol consumption, how to identify and control the intoxicated and aggressive person. To reduce the concentration of alcohol in alcoholic beverages.

II. The recommendations of the local level:

- 1. The strengthening of licensing.** The local authorities (municipalities), having the right not to issue a license for the retail sale of alcoholic beverages, are recommended: in reviewing and developing the alcoholic beverage licensing policy, to use the data on the crime and injuries related to the alcohol consumption. If in a particular municipality all companies selling alcoholic beverages have licenses, to apply the additional restrictions of a limited number of licenses to sell alcoholic beverages in a particular territory. To strengthen the issue of licenses to sell alcoholic beverages in rural areas in view of the fact that the rural population, ascribable to the group of people of the low social and economic status, the harm caused by alcohol is the greatest.
- 2. The application of screening and brief consultations.** It is recommended that the local authorities, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, should distinguish the alcohol prevention as the priority area and carry out the programs of screening and brief consultations for an early identification of the high-risk alcohol consumption. It is proposed to consider the possibility to provide the brief interventions when registering for the consultation with the family doctor, during the preventive health checks or in carrying out the preventive programs (for example, cardiovascular disease prevention program). To pay special attention to men of 25 – 54 years old of the working age who have the highest risk of the alcohol consumption.

3. The application of the interventions for students and their environment (family, community).

The recommendation is intended for the school administration, teachers, public health professionals, social workers and psychologists who work in the school, as well as the Ministry of Education, that should teach about the harmful effects of alcohol, involving training into the education and health education programs. The training programs should raise awareness of harmful effects of alcohol – physical, mental and social, create conditions for the formation of correct attitudes and perceptions about the alcohol consumption. However, the implementation of the educational interventions in school community should be not limited to education inside the school, but the complex programs involving students, school staff, the local community and students' parents, should be applied.