



EUROPEANS NEED MORE SCIENCE IN EU POLICY ON COMMON ADDICTIONS

The Platform for Better Preventive Healthcare came together on 8 September 2021 to discuss the need for more science in EU policy on common addictions such as alcohol, tobacco, and sugar. The event was hosted by MEP Aldo Patriciello (EPP, Italy) and featured a distinguished panel of EU drug policy experts, including Mr Jindrich Voboril (IRAP), Mr Antoine D'haese (SAFE, Safe Food Advocacy), and Prof. Dr. Heino Stoever (Faculty of Health and Social Work at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences).

The panel agreed that the basis of good quality legislation on common addictions rests in changing the way decision-makers think and perceive addictions. There is a need for a real debate on how to best address addictions to alcohol, tobacco, and sugar, with the involvement of decision-makers, scientists, civil societies, and the industry. The panel extends the following policy recommendations that will lead to improved EU policy on common addictions:

ENSURE AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TOWARDS COMMON ADDICTIONS

- Promote up-to-date scientific research in the EU health policy making.
- Debunk scientific myths surrounding addictions and prevention of diseases in general. Make sure to know what works and what has counterproductive effects in managing addictions.
- Based on the lessons learned from the application of the policy of harm reduction to illegal drugs, promote the use of harm reduction measures in the field of common addictions.
- Make sure that Europe's Beating Cancer Plan integrates new evidence on harm reduction policy to address common cancers caused by addictions to alcohol and tobacco. Addicted individuals deserve access to safer alternatives.
- Use the good work of the EU agency EMCDDA and consider expansion of its activity to other types of addictions.
- Develop an integrated approach to addictions that combines medical, psychological, and socio-economic circumstances of addicted individuals.

"Integrate the current research and science into health policies."

Jindrich Voboril

ENSURE THAT EU POLICY ON TOBACCO ADDICTIONS IS BASED ON SCIENCE

- Develop realistic political objectives at the EU level as regards policy towards tobacco addictions which are based on the latest scientific data and evidence.
- Based on the available wide body of scientific evidence, recognize the policy of harm reduction as an effective tool in smoking cessation.
- Promote best practices of those working with addicted individuals on the ground. Take into account the views of civil societies, nurses, and doctors.

"Europe's Beating Cancer Plan must recognize the role of e-cigarettes and harm reduction measures."

Prof. Dr. Heino Stoever



- Overcome political differences and initiate a cross-party discussion in the European Parliament on the best ways to prevent future addictions to tobacco while putting human health at the forefront of these discussions.
- Combine scientific knowledge with political weight to promote the scientific validity of the EU legislation in front of the European public and increase transparency in available options to reduce the negative consequences of common addictions on human health.
- Propose a regulatory strategy that enables access to harm reduction tools in order to ensure that everyone, regardless of their socio-economic situation, can improve their health.
- Make sure that the professional and business community can introduce means to reduce the risk of addictive behaviour of our patients and clients without unnecessary restrictions founded on outdated science.

INITIATE DISCUSSION ON THE NEED FOR A HARMONIZED EU POLICY ON SUGAR ADDICTION AND UNHEALTHY DIETS

- Strengthen consumer information through a new front-of-pack (FOP) nutrition labelling system that is able to highlight positive and negative nutrient profiles, informs on the presence of hazardous substances, and is mandatory in all EU Member States.
- Limit nutritional claims on high-fat sugar salt foods and on the marketing of unhealthy products, specifically those targeting children.
- Use graphic tools to allow consumers to understand the maximum amount of sugar that is suggested to be consumed.
- Encourage more concrete actions on food products reformulation.
- Establish harmonized EU recommendations for populations/individuals based on safe levels of dietary sugar intake.

"Strengthening consumer information is a central element to deal with common addictions."
Antoine D'haese

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