



Connecting minds for healthy lives

## Save the date

After the Christmas break on **16 January 2024**, the thematic **Side Event** of the Partnership Annual Conference will be held in Stockholm, Sweden. The conference "**Connecting Science and Well-being: Addressing antibiotic resistance through prevention and health promotion**" will focus on utilizing health promotion and behavioral insights in combatting antibiotic resistance. We will explore the crucial role of our individual microbiota and the repercussions of its disturbance through antibiotic use. Over the course of two keynote sessions, we will transition from individual to a broader societal perspective, and examine preventive strategies in healthcare. To conclude the conference, we will provide a view of the global landscape and share insights into current and forthcoming initiatives in this area. Participants will have opportunities to network and enjoy interactive activities between and during the sessions.

We are looking forward to seeing you there!

[Read more and register to the conference](#)

## NEWS

### PA Health in the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2023



The [14th EUSBSR Annual Forum](#), organized in the City of Riga on 4-5 October, invited participants to celebrate and reinforce multilevel cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. The forum consisted of a series of events, including Policy Area Workshops and the ever-so-important possibilities for networking. Close

to six hundred people from twenty countries had registered for the forum, showing the wide interest and support the Strategy holds.

The official programme included the [joint PA Health and PA Education workshop](#) and the kick-off event for the project – “Economy of Wellbeing of People”, financed by the Swedish Institute.



The PA Health and PA Education workshop "Economy of Well-being of People", EUSBSR Annual Forum 2023, Riga, Latvia

During the workshop, **Mr. Pasi Korhonen, Director of EU and International Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Finland)** presented an overview of a Wellbeing Economy model which was introduced at the EU level by Finland in 2019. Mr. Korhonen highlighted the benefits of investments in well-being policies and welfare structures. Effective and efficient policy measures on gender equality, education, health promotion and disease prevention, social inclusion, and occupational health and safety were listed to have a significant macroeconomic and microeconomic impact. Important steps in better advocating for the Economy of Well-being will be to gather more data, set indicators, and bring the concept to the global agenda in the UN Social Summit 2025.

The second keynote speaker of the workshop, **Ms. Inese Stepina, Deputy Director General, Adviser on EU and International Affairs, Employers' Confederation of Latvia**, introduced the participants to strategic health in all policies approach for active and healthy ageing and presented factors that determine well-being. Ms. Stepina emphasized that well-being refers to a

person's general condition of both – mental and physical health, which are then linked to job satisfaction, engagement, sense of purpose, and intention to stay in the company and contribute to its success. In a region where the number of workers of pre-retirement and retirement age is increasing and the number of young people entering the labor market is decreasing, well-being, quality health care, and appropriate work regimes are of utmost importance.

**The workshop was concluded with group discussions** where participants shared their thoughts on the topics starting from how they perceive healthy ageing and sustainable working life and what are the challenges of having a work-life balance, to how to find the right project partners, identify synergies and what does co-creation mean at the national and regional level. The discussion groups were facilitated by the [“Economy of Well-being for People” \(EWP\)\\_project](#) partners and the outcomes will feed into the project development.

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## The "Economy of Wellbeing of People" Project Kick-off in Riga



NDPHS Secretariat/ PA Health with the NCM in Latvia director and the "Economy of Wellbeing of People" project partners

Back to back with the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2023, **PA Health and PA Education** organized a meeting with all the partners of the joint "Economy

of Wellbeing of People - fostering cohesion towards a sustainable working life and ageing" (EWP) project. The participants from Estonia, Germany, Latvia, and Sweden were hosted by the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia and its director Stefan Eriksson.

The EWP project is aiming to establish a cross-policy platform for collaboration between regional stakeholders to tackle Health, Education, and Working life challenges identified in the EUSBSR Action plan. The meeting focused on the development of the methodology for transnational cross-sectoral work and a questionnaire for the stakeholder dialogue. One of the outcomes of the project is mapping and engaging potential partners across different sectors to join the collaborative platform.

*The project is financed by the Swedish Institute Baltic Sea Neighbourhood Programme.*


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## "MentalHealthMatters" Transnational Workshop in Tallinn



NDPHS Secretariat and the Expert Group on OSH with the "MentalHealthMatters" project partners

Since the beginning of the project in August, the partners in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Norway have been working with policymakers, employers, employees, researchers and other stakeholders to identify the national gaps in data and policy related to workplace psychosocial risks. During the transnational workshop in Tallinn, hosted by the Tallinn University of

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Technology, the partners had the opportunity to share the early results from their national communities of practice. **The motivation and incentives of the employers to invest time, effort, and resources into the mental health of their employees arose as a central challenge in all countries.**

“We tend to respond to issues only once they’ve escalated, and preventive measures are frequently overlooked”, says Ms. Karin Reinhold, Associate Professor on Management of Well-being at Work at the Tallinn University of Technology.



Alongside sharing the results from the national communities of practice, **the partners started to develop the first-aid kit for employers and managers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to prevent mental health issues among their workers, and a roadmap that proposes future actions for better response to current and emerging psychosocial risks in workplaces.**

The group discussed how to effectively involve the employers and managers to get their insight and to co-create the first-aid kit. During the session on the roadmap development, the partners identified and addressed joint challenges and gaps in the field of mental health at work. **One of the most significant challenges that we can observe across borders is the disparity between the supply and demand of psychosocial support for employees – both in the workplace and at the doctor’s office.**

[Click here to read more](#)

*The project is co-funded by the European Union and receives financial support from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021-2027.*

## “Arts on Prescription” project partners meet in Szczecin, ahead of piloting start



Testing of qualitative evaluation methods

The partners of the project “Arts on Prescription in the Baltic Sea Region” (AoP project) were hosted by the West Pomeranian Region of Poland in the beautiful city of Szczecin in September. **The event focused greatly on making the last preparations for piloting partners to start their local AoP programmes.** Beginning from October 2023, pilot interventions will run in Bremen (Germany), Odense (Denmark), Luleå and Boden (Sweden), Cēcis and Saldus, (Latvia), as well as in the West Pomeranian Region, and Szczecin (Poland). Back-to-back to the partner meeting a train-the-trainers workshop educated link workers on their role within the programme.

Also on the agenda were future plans such as establishing partnerships with other cities and municipalities in the Baltic Sea Region to promote the AoP concept more widely, and the formulation of policy recommendations.



The "Arts on Prescription" project partners during the discussions © Medij Dizajn

**The NDPHS Secretariat is supporting the AoP piloting partners by leading the project activity of transnational exchange.** This includes organising regular meetings between the relevant partners, collecting best practices and solutions to common challenges, and setting up mentoring groups. The Secretariat has also started to prepare an analysis of the health and social systems of countries in the Baltic Sea Region and their funding mechanisms, to explore possibilities and make recommendations for sustainably embedding AoP schemes into national systems.

[Click here to read more](#)

*The project is co-funded by the European Union and receives financial support from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021-2027.*

## Update from the Expert Group on HIV, TB, and AI



NDPHS Secretariat with the Expert Group on HIV, TB & AI and the Expert Group on OSH

At the end of September, our experts on HIV, Tuberculosis, and Associated Infections (HIV, TB&AI) met in Tallinn, Estonia where they generated new ideas for further work and initiated cross-thematic collaboration with experts on Occupational Safety and Health.

**High on the agenda was Ukraine and refugee populations.** The participants discussed the TB and HIV situation and service provision for refugees from Ukraine in their respective countries. A representative from the WHO Europe, Askar Yedilbayev, presented the situation in the wider Europe region. Meanwhile, the guests of the meeting from the Ministry of Health of Ukraine shared the situation and challenges regarding HIV service provision in Ukraine. It was highlighted that **one of the challenges faced by the people who have**

migrated from Ukraine is the mapping of services abroad, continuation of treatment, and patient data exchange.

The need and benefits of cross-thematic work in our Partnership is well-acknowledged. On the second day of the meeting, the experts on HIV, Tuberculosis, and Associated Infections held a joint session with the NDPHS Expert Group on Occupational Safety and Health to identify topics for collaboration. Experts brainstormed areas of interest for joint actions and the following potential cross-thematic activities were identified:

- HIV and TB screening policies and practices in the region;
- Needle stick injuries and other occupational exposure reporting in the region;
- HIV and TB-related policies against stigma in the workplace.

Both Expert Groups will investigate further the proposed topics and prioritize what could be developed in joint actions.

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## Update from the Expert Group on ASA



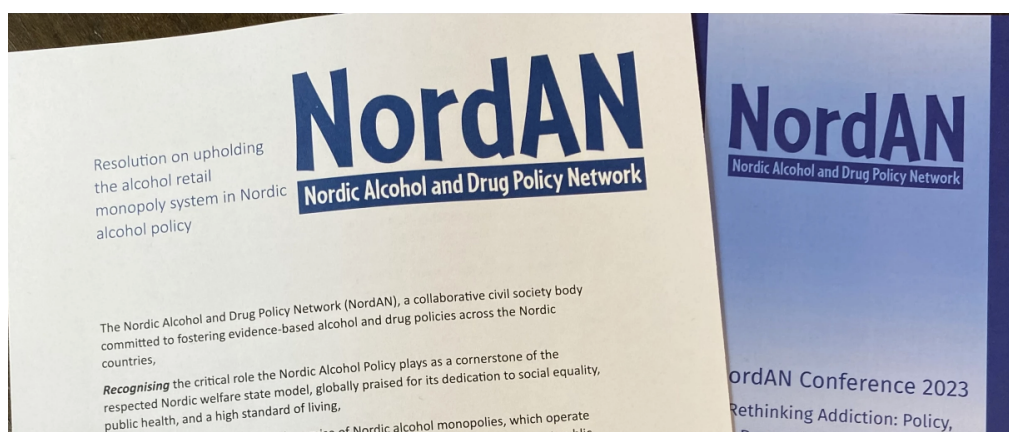
The NDPHS Expert Group on ASA

Early in October, our experts on Alcohol and Substance Use (ASA) met in Tallinn, Estonia where they discussed the rapid development and marketing of novel tobacco and emerging nicotine products, such as non-tobacco nicotine products, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), heated tobacco products, and smokeless tobacco. These products often circumvent existing regulations and have the potential to undermine the achievements of the WHO [Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#). The members are concerned that vapes are a "gateway" to smoking, especially among youth.



Although the long-term effects of novel tobacco and emerging nicotine products are still being discovered, limited available data on health effects indicate that these products are harmful for example to the developing brains of youth and young adults. As a result of these discussions, the experts decided to develop a so-called "**Letter of Concern**" and recommend the adoption of precautionary measures in response to the proliferation of novel tobacco and nicotine products until a comprehensive body of evidence on the associated health risks has been established. The Letter will be addressed to the NDPHS Partner Country Health Ministries, through the NDPHS Secretariat and CSR.

The ASA experts held a joint online session with the WHO Euro NCD office about the implementation of the WHO/EU Evidence into Action Alcohol project ([EVID-ACTION](#)). **One of the main objectives of this project is to expand health literacy and public knowledge of the harms of alcohol.**



The Expert Group meeting coincided with the conference: [The Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network \(NordAN\) conference: Rethinking Addiction: Policy, Prevention, and Progress](#)" where the ASA EG International Technical Advisor Mr. Zaza Tseretely took the stage during the plenary "**Issues relevant to NordAN member countries and organizations**" with a presentation on "**Alcohol and Tobacco control policies and challenges we face in the region. David versus Goliath?**" During the NordAN General Assembly meeting a resolution "[Upholding the alcohol retail monopoly system in Nordic alcohol policy](#)" was adopted.

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## Securing funding for NDPHS activities

NDPHS Secretariat together with the Expert Groups and potential project partners are continuously exploring new opportunities and applying for external

funding. We are excited to introduce three new projects that have recently been submitted for funding.

- **Solutions for age-friendly employer (SAFE) - Interreg Central Baltic Programme 2021-2027**
  - Partners - Tallinn University Haapsalu College (Estonia), Golden League (Estonia), Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), The NDPHS Secretariat.
  - Expected results and outputs are reduced age discrimination and improved opportunities of older people to stay in the labour market for a longer time, a framework for age-friendly workplace culture, policy recommendations, and workshops and training programs for employers and employees.
- **Latent Tuberculosis Infections Inventory (LTBI) - Norwegian Government funding**
  - Partners - The NDPHS Secretariat, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Finnish Lung Health Association, Estonian National Institute for Health Development
  - Expected results are increased knowledge and data about the LTBI situation in the region, evidence-based policy advice for the improved management of LTBI, and contribution towards the WHO End TB Strategy. The project will also improve cooperation between the partner countries as well as Ukraine.
- **Harmful alcohol use - prevalence and intervention for hospitals in the Baltic Region and Norway - Norwegian Government funding**
  - Partners - Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (Latvia), National Center for Addictive Disorders (Lithuania), Estonian Health Insurance Fund, Section of Drug Abuse Research, Oslo University Hospital, Norway.
  - The main focus of the project will be on the prevalence of harmful alcohol use among patients in hospitals, the procedures for screening it, and raising knowledge of treatment alternatives for harmful alcohol use for health personnel.

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## Meet and Greet new colleagues to the NDPHS family

**Marja Suomela**  
International Technical Advisor,  
Expert Group on HIV, TB & AI

Marja represents the Finnish  
Institute for Health and Welfare. As

**Josefin Ogne**  
Intern,  
NDPHS Secretariat

Josefin's healthcare background,  
combined with an education in

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a social scientist by education, her professional background is in project management and international development. Marja has worked on gender equality, human rights, and security-related programmes in the EU, UN agencies, and in civil society organisations. She has spent a large part of her professional life in Sub-Saharan Africa. Working towards reducing inequalities and discrimination in societies has always been her main motivation and domain.

social science and public health, fuels her passion for public health, specifically antimicrobial resistance (AMR). While pursuing a master's program in public administration and policy analysis at the University of Gothenburg, Josefin contributed to research on European AMR action plans during a recent internship. Eager to transition from academia to practical public health work, Josefin is exploring opportunities at the NDPHS and expanding her knowledge in the field.



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