



Strengthened Mental Health for a Resilient Baltic Sea Region

Vilnius, 14 November 2025

Senior representatives of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS), convening in Vilnius on 14 November 2025, acknowledge that the region faces a growing burden of mental health conditions and increasing demand for services. The ongoing pressures from social, economic, and environmental factors persist, while disparities in access to care and outcomes continue to exist.

To meet these challenges and build resilient societies, we must significantly strengthen our collective investment in mental health. Responding to this pressing priority, the Lithuanian Chair of the Partnership has placed mental health high on its agenda, translating political commitment into concrete initiatives.

The *Mental Health Matters* project, led by the NDPHS Secretariat and the Expert Group on Occupational Safety and Health, has advanced knowledge and capacity on psychosocial risks in the workplace. It has produced tools and recommendations for employers and policymakers to create healthier and safer working environments, with a strong focus on prevention and early support. These outcomes directly contribute to strengthening workforce resilience across the region.

The *Arts on Prescription* project, where NDPHS is a partner, has successfully piloted a model for integrating arts-based activities into health and social care pathways, and produced valuable practical tools, such as the online Arts on Prescription Guide – a comprehensive resource designed to support public authorities and professionals in health and culture. By engaging individuals with mental health challenges, the project has demonstrated improvements in well-being, reduced loneliness, and strengthened community connections. It also stands as an excellent example of the Health in All Policies approach, building bridges between the health and cultural sectors.

These projects illustrate the unique value of the Partnership: translating innovative, practice-based outcomes into knowledge that is shared with decision-makers through the NDPHS network. This bridge between practice and policy ensures that evidence and experiences from across the region are not only collected but also integrated into strategies for healthier and more resilient societies.

Looking ahead, the Partnership will continue to uphold its commitment to promoting mental health and supporting the development of resilient and inclusive societies. This includes advancing efforts in its role as coordinator of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Health, as well as leading initiatives that consolidate knowledge and action across the region.

We particularly highlight the NDPHS-led *Baltic Sea Region Mental Health Platform*, recognised by Interreg as an operation of strategic importance. This platform will provide a sustainable structure for cooperation and policy impact.

We also welcome the Swedish Institute-financed *ArtWell* project, which will reinforce collaboration between the culture and health sectors, and importantly involves Ukraine as a partner. We highly value this collaboration, as building a long-term, sustainable partnership with Ukraine based on mutual interest remains one of our priorities. We invite continued political attention to ensure that these regional initiatives translate into national action and sustainable change.

By endorsing this strengthened mental health agenda of the NDPHS, we reaffirm our shared responsibility to improve mental health and resilience in the Baltic Sea Region. Safeguarding the well-being of our societies and future generations depends on continued cooperation, innovation, and solidarity, with the NDPHS serving as a trusted forum to advance this work across the region.