



## Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm, 24-28 November, 2014

### **“Better, more effective, policies to reduce alcohol harm” say partner organisations of the Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm**

*The 2014 Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm aims to get EU and national policy makers to pledge to address alcohol related harm in Europe. The European region is by far the highest drinking region in the world, with social costs attributed to alcohol amounting to more than €155 billion annually, a majority of which lie outside the healthcare system<sup>1</sup>*

Brussels, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 - Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November, the European Liver Patients' Association (ELPA) is leading the second annual Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm (AWARH) 2014. The week will comprise different events in Brussels and in Strasbourg with the aim of encouraging discussion and identifying policy gaps in the field of alcohol at EU and national level.

*“The healthcare community is determined to join forces under the AWARH so that alcohol ceases to be the risk factor continuously overlooked by policy-makers”, says Tatjana Reic, President of ELPA. She adds, “There is a huge taboo to address this issue head on and to allocate the necessary resources for tackling alcohol-related harm. In light of the indirect costs caused by alcohol-harm policy-makers cannot afford to sit down and watch the health and productivity of our citizens be flushed down the drain.”*

Held for the second time, the Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm builds on the success of the first week, which showed the interest policy makers and the general public have in tackling the devastating effects of harmful alcohol consumption. As part of the week's activities, a number of infographics will be released which aim to highlight the socio-economic impact of not having appropriate policies in place and the difference these can potentially make. The week's activities will start with a breakfast meeting at the European Parliament in Strasbourg and end with the 6th European Alcohol Policy Conference which will be held in Brussels.

Mariann Skar, Secretary General of Eurocare, agrees with the importance of the AWARH *“the social cost of alcohol in the EU is estimated for 155 billion Euro per year. We simply cannot afford little action in the area of tackling alcohol related harm. It is one of the best investments we can make for our children's health and future. The AWARH offers an opportunity for everyone concerned to come together and work towards actions that would reduce alcohol related harm in Europe. On that occasion we would like to call on the European Institutions and all the stakeholders to step up actions on alcohol policy and support the AWARH pledge.”*

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<sup>1</sup> WHO-Europe, 2012, Alcohol in the European Union – consumption, harm and policy approaches, [http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/who\\_alcoholintheeu\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/who_alcoholintheeu_2012_en.pdf)

Alcohol is linked to more than 60 diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular diseases such as stroke and hypertension, liver diseases and alcohol use disorders and brain diseases such as alcohol dependence and depression<sup>2</sup>

**For further information and interview requests, please contact:**

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**About AwarH**

The European Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm (AWARH) was initiated in 2013 to call for the renewal of the EU Alcohol Strategy. During AWARH'13, healthcare stakeholders presented the Roundtable Conclusions on Reducing Alcohol Related Harm and MEPs opened discussions on working collaboratively on the need to renew the EU Alcohol Strategy. Further information about AWARH and the different activities which will take place during the week can be found at [www.awarh.eu](http://www.awarh.eu)

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<sup>2</sup> WHO-Europe, 2012, Alcohol in the European Union – consumption, harm and policy approaches, [http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/who\\_alcoholintheeu\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/who_alcoholintheeu_2012_en.pdf)