European Midwives Association

Statement on Alcohol

Harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption when pregnant is known to have long term detrimental effects on the life of the woman, the unborn baby and the family unit.

The European Midwives Association (EMA) acknowledges the statement of the European Alcohol and Health Forum that recognizes that harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption is a key health determinant and one of the main causes of premature death and avoidable disease.

The EMA urges Member States to recognize the essential health promotion and disease prevention role of midwives in the provision of preconception and antenatal care, and urges Member States to utilize the knowledge and skills of the midwife in the provision of antenatal care.

EMA calls on all Member States

(i)   to ensure that the midwifery education curricula contains appropriate information on alcohol related harm at preconception and during pregnancy and places this in the wider social context

(ii) to ensure that the midwifery education curricula equips midwifery students and midwives with the skills necessary to adopt an appropriate non-judgmental approach in consultation and discussion alcohol consumption.

EMA pledges, through its member associations,

• to seek ways of developing appropriate information on responsible patterns of alcohol consumption preconception;
• to seek ways of developing policies and practices aimed at the prevention and treatment of harmful and hazardous consumption preconception and during pregnancy.

In keeping with the philosophy of midwifery, EMA recognizes that such policies can only be appropriate when developed in partnership with women and other stakeholders.

As a member of the European Forum on Alcohol and Health, EMA is committed to monitoring and evaluating this work. Through its commitment, EMA is encouraging Member States to seek ways for midwives to work closely and effectively with

women, pre-pregnancy and during pregnancy, in order to reduce and avoid the adverse effects of hazardous alcohol consumption.