



CYPRUS NATIONAL  
ADDICTIONS AUTHORITY

## Including Online Gaming in the National Strategic Framework and Promoting Evidence-Based Practices by the Cyprus National Addictions Authority (NAAC)

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# CYPRUS



EUROPEAN UNION



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# SUMMARY

- **Route to today, part 1**
- **Introduction of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority**
- **National Strategy for Addressing Dependencies 2021- 2028 /Action plan**
- **Route to today, part 2**
- **Challenges and National plans**
- **How the project could assist our country**



# The route to today.... PART 1

- **2000** – Anti Drugs Council was founded in Cyprus
- **2004** - 1st National Strategy on illicit substances (**NS 2004-2008**)
- **2010** – 1st Strategy on tobacco / National Committee on tobacco ban and control

- **2011** – Alcohol was included in the National Strategy (**NS 2009-2012**)
- **2013** - National Strategy on Drugs and Alcohol included actions about tobacco (**NS 2013-2020**) - Notion of non –substance specific approach in prevention

- **2017**- legislation was updated- **Anti-Drugs Council becomes Cyprus National Addictions Authority**





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# Cyprus National Addictions Authority (NAAC)

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# Cyprus National Addictions Authority- NAAC

Main coordinating body in the field of licit and illicit substances as well as pathological gambling, responsible for, inter alia:

- Drafting and monitoring the national strategy and action plan on addictive substances and gambling
- Coordinating all activities in the field carried out by the various government services, NGO's and the private sector
- Accrediting, evaluating and funding (where possible) all related programmes, actions, and activities
- No person or entity shall apply any measure or intervention without obtaining NAAC's authorization



# Licensing and Funding Procedures

- NAAC is responsible for, inter alia accrediting, evaluating, and funding (where possible) all related programmes, actions, and activities in prevention, treatment and harm reduction.
- Licensing procedure (through out the year)
- Funding procedure (call for tenders / once per year)





# Promoting Evidence Based Approaches

## Prevention

- NAAC draws up the methodological approaches, guidelines and operation specifications of prevention programmes (Prevention Guidelines Booklet).
- European drug prevention quality standards (EDPQS)
- NAAC serves as the national reference point and coordination centre for the EUPC manual.

## Treatment

- 2010 -NAAC draws up standards and operational guidelines of treatment services -Treatment Guidelines Booklet
- 2019 - Treatment Guidelines Booklet was updated, includes:
  - Quality standards for treatment programs For people experiencing problems with illegal substances or alcohol and gambling disorders
  - Specific guidelines for each treatment type (counseling services, detox services, inpatient services e.t.c).



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# National Strategy for Addressing Dependencies 2021- 2028

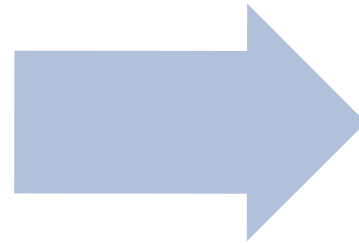
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# National Strategy for Addressing Addictions 2021-2028

National Strategy for Addressing Dependence to Illicit Substances and Alcohol Abuse 2013-2020



National Strategy for Addressing Addictions 2021-2028

New legislation of NAAC in 2017



Gambling disorder (GD) was reclassified into the "Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders"



# The National Addictions Strategy 2021-2028 is governed by the following Principles:

- Placing the Individual and their needs at the centre of interventions.
- Promoting the conviction that substance use, and addictive behaviours are a matter of public health.
- **Placing equal significance on all addictions, such as licit substances (alcohol, smoking), illicit substances as well as pathological gambling, both online and offline.**
- Pursuing the provision of equal, direct, and unhindered access for all (regardless of race, gender, nationality, age, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation), to all services.
- **Taking on board evidence-based measures and interventions and adopting best practices, not influenced by moralistic approaches or political expediencies.**
- **Placing the safeguarding of human rights at the forefront of the policy for addressing addictions.**



# The ultimate goals of the National Strategy

- **Protecting of children and young people from use, abuse, and any form of addiction so that they can reach their full potential.**
- **Enabling access to treatment and other support services by all those who need help, whether it concerns addicts or their family members, who are directly affected.**
- Reducing deaths directly or indirectly related to substance abuse and addiction.
- Reducing, and if possible, eliminating stigma surrounding people with a history of addiction and their families.
- **Protecting public health and the well-being of citizens.**
- Ensuring the protection and security of all society, from serious, and especially organized, crime related to illegal illicit substances.



# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

Two Action Plans

-2021-2024

-2025-2028

Dynamic Documents

Assign to institutions, services and partners the responsibility for the implementation of the specific initiatives of each pillar, under the guidance and coordination of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority.



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# National Strategy for Addressing Addictions

## Pillars:

- Prevention
- Treatment
- Social reintegration
- Harm Reduction
- Supply Reduction
- Research, Evaluation, Training
- International Cooperation



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Illicit  
Substances

Alcohol

Gambling  
Disorder

Tobacco

# Action Plan 2021-2024: Prevention

- An effective Prevention Strategy ought to focus on both the individual (biopsychosocial approach) and the social dimension surrounding substance use and addictive behaviours, in order to understand the conditions under which people of all ages use substances, both licit and illicit.
- The Strategy recognizes the preventive value of a diverse variety of support and creative activities to be undertaken by children and young people.
- Evidence based prevention is NOT about providing information about addictive substances





# The route to today...PART 2

- **2021** a discussion took part in the Parliament about internet addiction.
- **2023** the Ministry of Health started a discussion about the amendment of NAAC's legislation expanding its responsibilities thus including gaming (gaming disorder has been included in the ICD-11 and DSM-5 diagnostic manuals).
- **2024** the legal audit on the new law is finished.
- **2025** the law will be submitted to the Parliament for voting.
- .....**Parallel in 2018** NAAC started collaborating with the Cyber Safety Centre operating since 1st of July 2016 under the coordination of the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus.



# Challenges

Limited available research data regarding gaming (the prevalence of online gaming is 22% among students- thus exceeding the European average - NAAC, 2019; ESPAD, 2019).

Need for cooperation with other relevant stakeholders.

Limited experience of NAAC's personnel on gaming issues.

Need for evidence-based guidelines (update the relevant guides) for prevention and treatment programs - procedures for accreditation.

Need to increase the budget of NAAC.



# National plans

- Finalising the amendment of NAAC's law.
- Implementing the second four-year Action Plan 2025-2028 which already includes generic prevention actions regarding gaming.
- Adopting all the results of the project “Promoting the mental health of children and youth by addressing the risks of online gambling and gaming”.
- Documenting and monitoring of the phenomenon of gaming.
- Ensuring that all minors and youth have access to specialized treatment related to gaming disorder.
- Exchange of good practices for tackling the phenomenon.
- Promoting evidence-based approaches and programs



# How the project could assist our country

Specific support to Cyprus by the project has been foreseen in the form of:

- Situational analysis
- Technical support in the identification of regulatory gaps
- Development of regulatory and legislative safeguards regarding online gaming
- Implementation of a best practice prevention program
- Organizing scientifically founded preventive campaigns in the framework of the current action plan



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ΕΞΑΡΤΗΣΕΩΝ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ



ΓΡΑΜΜΗ ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗΣ  
ΚΑΙ ΣΤΗΡΙΞΗΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑΤΙΚΗ  
ΕΝΑΣΧΟΛΗΣΗ ΜΕ ΤΑ ΤΥΧΕΡΑ ΠΑΙΧΝΙΔΙΑ  

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HELPLINE FOR PROBLEMATIC GAMBLING




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YouTube



An aerial photograph of a coastal town and a bay. The town, with various buildings and greenery, is visible in the background. The bay features clear, turquoise water and a prominent rocky island in the foreground. The text "Thank you for your attention!" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Thank you for your attention!