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Dear Professor,

Thank you for your letters of 10 June to President Juncker and myself expressing your concern about alcohol and supporting the need for a new Alcohol Strategy.

First, I fully share your concern about alcohol misuse, which has devastating consequences that concern me as an individual, as a medical doctor and as European Commissioner.

I have taken full note of the European Parliament's Resolution of April calling for a new alcohol strategy, as well as recent discussions with Health Ministers at the Council, and the calls for reinforced EU action to address alcohol which I have received.

Second, I believe the European Commission needs to continue to work together with Member States and civil society, across a range of policy areas, to help tackle not only the consequences of alcohol misuse but, more importantly, the reasons which lead to such misuse.

The European Commission intends to find the best way to help Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm and addressing the reasons that lead to alcohol misuse – in the light of the recent discussions in the Parliament and in the Council. The Commission is currently examining all possible options for action to support national authorities in this regard. The Commission has not yet taken a decision concerning future EU action and the extent to which cooperation on alcohol could usefully be looked at in a wider context of tackling the key risk factors of chronic diseases.

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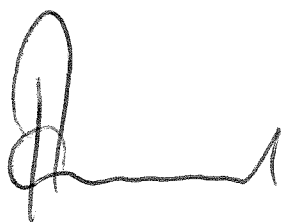
In the meantime, while internal discussions advance, I intend to continue on-going action, such as supporting the Joint Action to reduce alcohol related harm and the Action Plan on binge drinking, within the context of the 2006-2012 Strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm.

Third, I would like to assure you that the Commission is willing to continue working in close co-operation with NGOs and civil society to address the causes and consequences of alcohol misuse.

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Looking forward to a continuous fruitful co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized capital letter 'D' followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small upward flick.