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Minister of Health
Government of Catalonia

Welcome to the INEBRIA 2012 Conference and to Barcelona

As Minister of the Department of Health of the Government of Catalonia I am pleased to welcome you to the 9th Annual conference of the International Network on Brief Interventions for Alcohol Problems (INEBRIA). Welcome to Catalonia.

Catalonia is at the forefront of Europe in terms of health indicators, thanks to the highly trained and specialized services and professionals that form its healthcare system. Presently the challenge facing us is focussed on the reorganization of the public healthcare services, in order to provide an improved response to the present needs of the Catalan population; ageing, the increase in sufferers of chronic illnesses and pathologies related with mental health and addictions, among others.

During the last 15 years Catalonia has made a significant effort to include policies in the ambit of alcohol and drugs in all of the existing tools for planning in health: such as the 2011-15 Health Plan, including the 2006 Director Plan on Mental Health and Addictions and more specific ones such as the Prevention Plan on drugs consumption and related problems (2012-2016).

In all of them, emphasis is placed on the importance of the implementation of Brief Interventions, in line with the recommendations of the WHO, in all the non-specialist health services, and in primary healthcare in particular.

This Department's support for this type of policies is the result of the evidence accumulated over the years in studies carried out by all of you who make up INEBRIA, and of the fruitful experience in our country with the implementation, on the part of the Public Health Agency of Catalonia's Program of Substance Abuse, of the Drink Less programme. A programme which has enabled, among other things, a raising of awareness among our primary healthcare professionals and, even more importantly, has caused a cultural change in their role in alcohol and drug problems.

Hosting this 9th Conference represents a challenge but at the same time an opportunity to continue broadening our knowledge and to continue researching and training our professionals.

We thank you all for coming. We hope that these two days will be highly profitable and will enable you to establish new collaborations and strengthen the existing ones between you, causing INEBRIA to continue to grow and become consolidated as it has until now.

I would also like to invite you to get to know our city and our country, and I wish you an enjoyable stay in Barcelona, capital of Catalonia.