

change is
in the air

Future Directions
in Tobacco Control in the EU

Change is in the air - future directions in tobacco control in the European Union

Conference Recommendations

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INTRODUCTION

In the new enlarged European Union tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death claiming more than 660,000 lives each year. This figure does not include deaths from passive smoking. Smoking remains the largest single cause of death and disease and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The national economies of Member States bear a substantial economic burden due to tobacco use. International experience has shown that greater and sustained levels of investment can have a dramatic impact on smoking prevalence, saving lives and money.

The aim of these recommendations is to contribute to the ongoing and future Tobacco Control Policy in the European Union in accordance with a strengthened scientific evidence base. They should also highlight and focus the attention of policymakers on the need for a comprehensive multifaceted approach to tobacco control encompassing prevention, protection, cessation and harm reduction, together with strong political leadership and the need to engage and empower communities and stakeholders in support of tobacco control policies.

ACTIONS AT EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL LEVEL

There is a need to create and manage greater synergy between Member States and the European Community. The Community should play a lead role in coordinating and supporting Member States strategies and in facilitating cooperation between Member States and the sharing of best practices.

Comprehensive tobacco control strategies should include, inter alia:

- Regular price rises above inflation
- Comprehensive advertising bans
- Smoke-free public places laws
- Cessation programmes
- Product regulation
- Building research capacity
- Comprehensive evaluation

In addition:

- Member States are recommended to consider creating national coordination bodies for tobacco control to oversee strategy in this field, such as the Office of Tobacco Control in Ireland that was set up to implement tobacco control measures.
- National expertise and capacity need to be developed

INVESTMENT

- Substantially increased investment will be required to implement national tobacco control strategies
- The EU is recommended to target existing resources (such as the Tobacco Fund) at effective tobacco control measures and secure additional funding for the future.
- Potential funding mechanisms could include earmarking of tobacco taxes and/or introducing a national licensing system for tobacco



REGULATORY ACTIONS

- Tobacco industry should fully disclose content and emissions of tobacco products
- Systems for reporting and analysing ingredients in and emissions from tobacco products should be harmonised
- Short term regulatory recommendations include:
 - Mandatory use of colour pictorial warnings on packets of cigarettes
 - Reduction of tobacco specific nitrosamines without increasing other toxins
 - Production of reduced ignition cigarettes
 - Consideration be given to the removal of ISO yields from packets of cigarettes

RESEARCH ACTIONS

- National bodies are recommended to develop tobacco control research strategies to oversee implementation, to include:
 - Improved surveillance data
 - Harmonised methodologies for tobacco control research e.g. collecting prevalence and mortality data
 - Regular measurement of individual smoke exposure across populations
 - Evaluation should be an integral part of the research strategy
 - Sharing of research findings and best practice in the field of tobacco control

WHO-FCTC ACTIONS

- All Member States are urged to ratify the FCTC as soon as possible
- The possibility of FCTC protocols on the elimination of cross-border tobacco advertising and illegal trade in tobacco products should be explored at an early stage

CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Partnerships are needed with a wider range of stakeholders in society to ensure the success of tobacco control strategies
- Increased capacity is needed at civil society level for tobacco control

CONCLUSIONS

- A comprehensive multifaceted approach is needed that will encompass prevention, protection, cessation and harm reduction measures
- There is a need for strong political leadership and commitment to addressing tobacco control issues. However it is noted that tobacco control measures can be popular and pay political and public health dividends. The recent Irish experience of the ban on smoking in enclosed workplaces has resulted in a 97% compliance rate within a month of its introduction
- Communities and stakeholders need to be engaged and empowered to support strong tobacco control policies and ensure compliance
- A strong evidence base is required to underpin tobacco control

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