



Brussels, 19 March 2020
SANTE B2

INFORMATION WEBINAR ON TOBACCO POLICY

19 MARCH 2020
VIDEOCONFERENCE

–DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD–

(1) Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed the participants. The Chair expressed regret over cancelling the in-person expert group meeting originally scheduled for this day. She further clarified that the main purpose of the webinar was to provide a short information update on recent developments with specific focus on the report concerning the application of the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) and the related questionnaire that will be sent to the Member State Competent Authorities. The invitation was addressed to all members of the Expert Group on Tobacco Policy and its Subgroups on Ingredients, E-cigarettes and Traceability and Security Features.

After the approval of the agenda the participants were updated on a decision adopted by the Commission pursuant to Article 24(3). This entailed national provisions notified by Greece, prohibiting the placing on the market of chewing and nasal tobacco. Further, the Commission updated on the work carried out by the Independent Advisory Panel on characterising flavours in tobacco products, and the preparatory work for the upcoming ninth Conference of the Parties of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

(2) Joint Action on Tobacco Control (JATC)

The first JATC was launched in October 2017 and shall be concluded by October 2020. It was set up primarily to support EU-Member States in the technical implementation of the then new TPD rules. The Annual Work Plan 2020 foresees funding for another JATC with a broader focus on integrating product regulation in the wider context of tobacco control policies, including:

- Facilitating Member States' work in assessing tobacco and related products and enforcing the applicable standards by:
 - Building on/complementing the ongoing Joint Action on Tobacco Control;
 - Increased technical capacities and enforcement cooperation.
- Better understanding the properties and regulatory implications of novel tobacco products and e-cigarettes, including:
 - Industry marketing strategies and possible loopholes in the advertisement restrictions;
 - Use patterns, e.g.; circumvention of smoke-free environments.

- Identifying and disseminating best practices to develop an effective and comprehensive tobacco control policy by:
 - Strengthening cooperation between Member States and the Commission in the area of tobacco control;
 - Progressing towards smoke/tobacco-free society through roadmaps for national endgame strategies.

As announced prior to the meeting, the process was triggered with nomination letters sent to Member States' permanent representatives in Brussels. These are in charge of coordinating the process for all four joint actions concerned. Member States are invited to nominate one single competent authority, which will participate on behalf of the country.

The original deadline for the nomination was 3 April 2020, which has been extended to 24 April (re-confirmed after the meeting). Nominations received after this deadline will not be taken into account. Participants were advised to contact departments in charge of the Health programme management, should they not have been contacted yet.

SANTE encouraged all Member States to take part in any form and to invite those who would like to take a more active role to contact peers. DG SANTE is also happy to facilitate any further networking.

The schedule for the Joint Action preparation is rather tight this year with the following important milestones:

- Information day scheduled for 29 April 2020 in Luxembourg (possibly as videoconference)
- Invitations to submit a proposal will be addressed to designated coordinators in May with the submission deadline in September.

(3) Commission report on the application of the Directive (Article 28)

a) General status update

SANTE updated the participants on the status of the preparatory work, including:

- 2020 Tobacco Eurobarometer: the fieldwork has been temporarily postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions
- SCHEER scientific opinion: likely delay (current estimate of at least 2 months) in view of colleagues being deployed to work on Coronavirus.
- Product Perception Study: the final report is under review and will feed into the general Application Study. The outcomes will be made public simultaneously.
- Application study: should provide the key input by triangulating all the partial inputs. The fieldwork phase has been launched with the distribution of the Member States Questionnaire which will be presented by the external contractor ICF.

b) Member State Questionnaire

Article 28 calls the Member States to assist the Commission and provide all available information for carrying out the assessment and preparing the report. Acknowledging the complexity of the requested information, a structured questionnaire has been developed to collect essential input. This has been distributed as a self-standing text file (rather than internet survey), allowing multiple competent authorities to consolidate their input. The expert groups' members were asked to ensure good coordination at national level.

Subsequently, the external contractor explained the questionnaire structure and guided the participants through its key sections. Participants were offered to ask for any clarification either orally or in written after the webinar. Member States were encouraged to elaborate on their replies, whenever possible/applicable, either for each of the questions or in dedicated text boxes provided for each of the sections.

Some participants expressed their concern about the deadline of 21 April and asked for possible extension. SANTE explained the rationale for the tight schedule for the whole Article 28 report, however acknowledged the specificities of the current working arrangements and promised to consider a minor extension on a needs basis. Member States were also encouraged to submit partial replies within the deadline in case only limited pieces of information were pending (which should be provided in a timely manner).

Close of the meeting.

Annex I: List of participants

European Commission:

DG SANTE B2

Katja Bromen
Matus Ferech
Agnieszka Kozakiewicz
Andrea Schwarz
Julia Langer

Member States:

Austria	(Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection)
Croatia	(Ministry of Health)
Cyprus	(Ministry of Health, Medical and Public Health Services)
Czech Republic	(Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health)
Denmark	(Ministry of Health)
Finland	(Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
France	(Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
Germany	(Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety)
Greece	(Permanent Representation of Greece to the EU)
Hungary	(Ministry of Human Capacities – Focal Point on Tobacco Control)
Ireland	(Department of Health, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Unit)
Italy	(Ministry of Health)
Lithuania	(Ministry of Health)
Malta	(Ministry of Health – Environmental Health Directorate, Customs Department)
Poland	(Ministry of Health, Bureau for Chemical Substances, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU)
Portugal	(General Directorate of Health - Ministry of Health, Tax and Customs Authority - Ministry of Finance)
Slovakia	(Public Health Authority, Permanent Representation of Slovakia to the EU)
Spain	(Ministry of Health)
Sweden	(Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Public Health Agency)
The Netherlands	(Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU)