

**7th Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)
7 November 2016**

Greater Noida, India

Statement by Ambassador Tomasz Kozłowski, Head of the EU Delegation at COP7, on behalf of the EU and its Member States

First of all I would like to extend my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of India for taking the effort of organising this important event and also to the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC for the substantial preparatory work essential for carrying out our deliberations in an efficient and focused manner in the course of next days.

I speak here on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States. The EU aligns its position with the statement delivered by the European Region.

As well as expressing my support for the EURO region statement, I would also like to inform you about some important developments in the EU.

On 20 May this year, the new Tobacco Products Directive became applicable in the EU Member States. This important piece of legislation brings EU tobacco control better in line with the FCTC and regulates several key product features such as tobacco ingredients, emissions, labelling and packaging, as well as related products.

The main reason we are gathering here today is to make the conference a success by advancing the work of the WHO FCTC, thereby strengthening the global battle against the devastating consequences of tobacco use.

The EU has high expectations for CoP7, and we would like to encourage all Parties to focus on the objectives of the Convention, such as transparency and Article 5.3, the partial guidelines for Articles 9 and 10 and ensuring that our work on FCTC implementation is focused and effective. We are also gathered here to agree on and discuss critical issues related to the Illicit Trade Protocol.

By the act of signing the WHO FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products in 2013, the EU committed to ratify and implement it. I am therefore very pleased that the EU can now report on the deposition of the instrument of ratification of the Protocol at UN Head Quarters in New York on 24 June 2016.

The EU is determined to fight illicit trade in tobacco in a transparent manner. Not only does illicit tobacco trade drain the budgets of governments and feed into organised crime, but it also severely undermines our efforts to protect public health.

By circumventing tax and customs duty regulation, illicit tobacco trade offers consumers access to cheaper tobacco products –which in turn increases its chances of attracting vulnerable groups, such as young people.

Illicit tobacco products are also unlikely to comply with the basic requirements of product regulation, such as the mandatory health warnings on packs, which have been proven to play a role in deterring consumers.

The Illicit Trade Protocol - as the first international legally binding instrument aiming specifically at tackling the problem of illicit tobacco trade - is a milestone in the FCTC development. It recognises that illicit trade is a global problem that cannot be solved by individual Parties acting in isolation.

In our view, a key measure of the Protocol is its Article 8, which establishes a global tracking and tracing regime, consisting of national and regional systems, without unnecessary interaction with the tobacco industry.

In the EU, the Tobacco Products Directive will implement this aspect of the Protocol by introducing an EU-wide tracking and tracing system for all tobacco products.

The system will be introduced by May 2019 for cigarettes and Roll-Your-Own tobacco products, and by 2024 for all other tobacco products.

The task to establish an EU-wide tracking and tracing system is an ambitious one, and work is already underway by the European Commission to prepare the necessary secondary legislation to implement the system in concrete terms. We are very committed to this task and in particular to make the EU system fully compliant with the Protocol by providing authorities full control over the supply chain of tobacco products to ensure a highly effective tool in fighting illicit trade.

We sincerely hope that the EU will be soon followed by a critical mass of other Parties in ratifying the Protocol and implementing its vital provisions, notably the tracking and tracing system.

In order to encourage such a development the EU has also proposed a direct grant to the Convention Secretariat to promote the implementation in EU Member States and key neighbouring countries.

In the more than ten years since it entered into force, the FCTC has been an important model for how different sectors of government and multiple UN agencies can work together to reach a common goal. We believe this is the opportunity to strengthen our cooperation even further to ensure that the implementation of the treaty is wide-spread and effective.

In relation to our commitment to a truly world-wide FCTC implementation, I have the honour to ask my French and UK colleagues to take the floor with some important announcements.

Thank you.