

ECDA Statement on World No Tobacco Day

31st May 2017

Europe faces the highest prevalence of tobacco use by adults and one of the highest by adolescents in all WHO regions. In the European Union, around 28 million young adults aged 25-34 years are smokers and the latest Eurobarometer survey indicates a 5% increase in tobacco consumption in people aged 15-24 since 2014¹.

Tobacco is a leading cause of mortality in Europe and one of the four main preventable risk factors for chronic diseases. Tobacco use is particularly linked to many types of cancers, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. The World Health Organization estimates that Europe has one of the highest proportions of deaths attributable to tobacco use (both smoking and smokeless) in the world² while around 50% of European smokers die prematurely³.

Tobacco control is considered as one of the most effective means to help achieve the [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 3](#) target 3.4 of a one-third reduction globally, by 2030, of premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular disease, cancers and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In addition to better health and wellbeing for EU citizens, a reduction in tobacco consumption of only 2% represents annual healthcare savings of approximately €506 million for the EU⁴.

While EU Member States committed to the SDGs, greater action is needed to ensure the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in all countries and effectively fight the tobacco epidemic.

Today on World No Tobacco Day, the ECDA calls on all EU Member States to:

- Adopt or reinforce national policies banning tobacco consumption in public spaces;
- Introduce national rules on plain packaging of tobacco products;
- Increase the price of tobacco products via higher taxes to reduce numbers of people starting and continuing tobacco consumption; and ban cross-border distance sales of tobacco products;
- Provide multidisciplinary support and follow-up care to adults and adolescents in smoking cessation or smokers who wish to reduce their consumption as well as to ex-smokers;
- Ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the EU Tobacco Products Directive and include tobacco control in the national response to the Sustainable Development Goals

Further, the ECDA calls on the European Commission to:

- Step up efforts to promote smoking prevention and tobacco-free environments, especially through the continuation/strengthening of pan-European awareness-raising campaigns on tobacco, such as the “Ex-Smokers are Unstoppable” campaign;
- Support EU Member States in their measures and actions to reduce tobacco consumption, in particular by supporting the exchange of best practices across EU countries;
- Drive a favourable policy environment to tobacco control under the internal market rules and especially further address the advertising of tobacco products, including indirect advertising targeting young people on the internet

Efforts should be sustained to enhance a smoke-free environment if we are to get serious about protecting Europe’s citizens from chronic diseases caused by tobacco smoking and generate savings for our economies.

¹ Special Eurobarometer 458, Attitudes of Europeans towards tobacco and electronic cigarettes, 30 May 2017.

² WHO data and statistics on tobacco. <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/tobacco/data-and-statistics>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/policy_en

⁴ Statement by European Health Commissioner V. Andriukaitis, 20 May 2016, STATEMENT/16/1882. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-16-1882_en.htm