

Tobacco continues killing 700,000 Europeans every year

Raising tax on tobacco, an effective solution to prevent tobacco deaths

Brussels, 31 May 2014 (World No Tobacco Day) – The European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP) and the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) promote support for smokers that take the important step of quitting smoking to improve the length and quality of their life. Tobacco brings almost [700,000 citizens of the European Union \(EU\) to death](#) every year. (1)

Smokers need stronger support to stop their addiction before its consequences are irreparable. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), tobacco is the single most preventable cause of death, and tobacco smoke is the primary cause of [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#) in developed countries, a preventable but progressive chronic disease, expected to become the third leading cause of death in 2030 worldwide. (2) Moreover, tobacco exacerbates respiratory problems and allergies. As stated by the Chair of EFA's COPD working Group, Michael Wilken, "I felt that I only really had the choice between giving up smoking and giving up breathing".

Taxation is the most effective policies to control tobacco consumption (3). Through a stricter implementation of the [WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control \(FCTC\)](#), which has been ratified by the EU and 168 countries around the world to date -especially of the FCTC Article 6 which concerns price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco-, and of the [EU rates applied to manufactured tobacco](#), the European Union could significantly strengthen its public health. (4) (5)

More needs to be done. The EU has just adopted the new [Tobacco Products Directive](#) to reduce by 2% the tobacco consumption among the European youth by 2020. (6) However, "the European Union should advance quicker to have the FCTC implemented in Europe by 2020, in order to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use in Europe to less than 5% by 2040", says Prof. Panagiotis Behrakis, ENSP President.

The EU could significantly limit the onset of asthma and COPD through stricter tobacco control policies and the proper implementation of the latest legislation to avoid new smokers. Moreover, the European Union should implement the smoke free Europe recommendations to avoid that non-tobacco users are exposed to second-hand smoke, especially [in the case of babies and children](#). (7)

The long-term objective, as reiterated several times by the World Health Organisation, should be to create a future free of tobacco-caused deaths and diseases.

We are tweeting

- Each EU Member State need to implement direct taxes on tobacco to reach a free-tobacco generation <http://bit.ly/SeLlKM> #WNTD @EU_health
- Tobacco taxes up, deaths and diseases down. Check the video: <http://bit.ly/1rfY2vB> #WNTB #tobacco #no_tobacco <http://bit.ly/1mPnoeG>

Contacts

Cornel Radu-Loghin, Director of Policy and Strategy, European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP), Email: cornel.radu@ensp.org Tel: +32 2 230 6515

Isabel Proaño, Communications Officer, European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA), Email: isabel.proano@efanet.org Tel: +32 2 227 2712

References

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- (2) WHO Fact Sheet 135: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, 2013 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs315/en/>
- (3) WHO Raising Tax on Tobacco What you need to know 2014 http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/112841/1/WHO_NMH_PND_14.2_eng.pdf
- (4) WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), 2003 <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241591013.pdf?ua=1>
- (5) European Union, Directive 2011/64/EU of 21 June 2011 on the structure and rates of excise duty applied to manufactured tobacco http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/excise_duties/tobacco_products/legislation/index_en.htm
- (6) European Union, Directive 2014/40/EU of 3 April 2014 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/docs/dir_201440_en.pdf
- (7) "Effect of pre- and postnatal tobacco smoke exposure on specific sensitization to food and inhalant allergens during the first 3 years of life", Multicenter Allergy Study Group, Germany, 1999, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10321557>

*The **European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP)** is an independent, international non-profit association, which aims to reduce tobacco consumption and to develop a common strategy, amongst organisations active in smoking prevention and tobacco control in Europe, by sharing information and experience and through co-ordinated activities and projects. Visit www.ensp.org for more information. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and Twitter ([@enspbrussels](#)).*

*The **European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)** is a non-profit network of allergy, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD) patients organisations, representing 35 national associations in 22 countries and over 400,000 patients. EFA is member of ENSP and dedicated to making Europe a place where people with allergies, asthma and COPD have the right to best quality of care and safe environment, live uncompromised lives and are actively involved in all decisions influencing their health. Visit www.efanet.org for more information. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and Twitter ([@EFA Patients](#)).*