



## Commission welcomes Council Recommendation on stronger measures on smoke-free environments

Brussels, 3 December 2024

The Commission welcomes the adoption by the Council today of the revision of the Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments. The revised Recommendation aims to **better protect people, especially children, from second-hand smoke and aerosols**. It also seeks to **de-normalise and discourage the use of tobacco and emerging products**, especially among younger people, and **fight against nicotine addiction**.

Tobacco and nicotine consumption is the largest avoidable health risk, and the most significant cause of premature death in the EU. The revised Recommendation calls on Member States to extend smoke-free environment policies to key outdoor areas, such as public playgrounds, outside areas of healthcare and education premises, public buildings and transport stops.

This Recommendation has a **particular focus on better protecting children and young people** from the adverse impacts of second-hand smoke. Member States also supported the revised Recommendation's call to include emerging products (such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products) in their smoke-free policies, which are increasingly appealing to very young users.

The Recommendation follows and builds on national-level actions some Member States have already taken, such as extending smoke-free policies to educational facilities and the inclusion of emerging products in existing smoking bans.

The World Health Organization has clearly stated that **there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke** and outlines that exposure to second-hand aerosols of emerging products such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products can potentially result in significant respiratory and cardiovascular issues.

The Commission will support Member States in the implementation of the Recommendation, including with EU funding from the EU4Health programme. It is up to each Member State to consider and implement the Recommendation in accordance with their national context.

### Background

Nearly 700,000 lives are lost in the EU every year due to tobacco consumption. It is a leading cause of cancer, with 27% of all cancers attributable to the use of tobacco. In 2023, 24% of Europeans were estimated to be smokers. The objective of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is to achieve a tobacco-free generation by 2040, where less than 5% of the EU population uses tobacco products.

### For more information

[Council Recommendation on smoke- and aerosol-free environments](#)

[Questions and Answers on Smoke-Free Environments](#)

[Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#)

[EU4Health Programme](#)

[Horizon Europe Programme](#)

[Factsheet on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#)

IP/24/6185

Quote(s):

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*"Many cancers, cardiovascular disease and other chronic illnesses can be avoided with basic lifestyle changes. Tobacco is a leading cause of preventable death in the EU and second-hand smoke has clear, negative health effects. The Commission is fully committed to supporting Member States' efforts to boost the health and resilience of our population - present and future generations."*

Teresa Ribera Rodríguez, Executive Vice-President for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition - 03/12/2024

*"We lose nearly 700,000 lives in the EU every year due to tobacco consumption, and more than half of all smokers start before the age of 19. Today's agreement is a crucial step towards our goal of a tobacco-free generation in Europe, and is critical in protecting our children and young people from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. This is an important part of our work to tackle preventable cancer, cardiovascular disease and other illnesses across Europe."*

Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare - 03/12/2024

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