

Nordic Cancer Union

Recommendations for the revision of the EU tobacco directives

The issue in brief

New tobacco and nicotine products are causing an alarming surge in youth nicotine addiction across Europe. To safeguard the next generation and achieve a tobacco and nicotine-free future by 2040, the Nordic Cancer Union urges the EU to immediately revise its Tobacco Directives.

This revision must strengthen regulations, counter aggressive industry tactics, and empower Member States to implement robust public health measures, fully aligning with the global standards of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

Youth nicotine addiction fuelled by destructive innovation

The tobacco industry aggressively targets young people with novel products (nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes, heated tobacco) through social media, child-friendly flavours, and appealing packaging. These products exploit regulatory gaps, act as gateways to addiction, and can pose significant health risks. Alarming increases in youth nicotine use in Nordic countries, driven by flavoured products with extremely high nicotine content, serve as a stark warning for the entire EU.

Nordic Cancer Union's Three Key Recommendations to the EU:

1. Increase Prices & Limit Imports

- Introduce higher minimum prices for all tobacco and nicotine products through the EU Tax Directive.
- Drastically reduce personal import limits (e.g., from 800 to 100 cigarettes, and equivalent strict limits for all other nicotine products like 100g for snus/nicotine pouches) to curb cross-border trade.

2. Protect Youth from Industry Tactics

- Future-proof definitions for all tobacco and nicotine products, including synthetic nicotine and analogues.
- Ban all direct and indirect marketing (including social media) and introduce plain packaging for all products.
- Ban all flavours except tobacco flavour as additives in all products.
- Implement a ban on online sales of tobacco and nicotine products.
- Ensure full implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 to protect health policy from industry interference.

3. Empower Member States to Act

- Reaffirm and strengthen the right of Member States to implement measures beyond the minimum requirements of the FCTC to protect public health.
- Reinforce and expand national room for action under TPD/TTD Article 24 (2,3) to enable policies such as bans on new products or plans for a gradual phase-out of the sale of all tobacco and nicotine products.

Why This Is Critical

All tobacco and nicotine products are harmful and highly addictive, and tobacco are causing nearly 700,000 deaths annually in the EU. Updating the EU Tobacco Directives is crucial to protect Europe's youth, empower Member States to combat nicotine addiction, and achieve a tobacco and addiction-free generation, in full accordance with international public health commitments.

About Nordic Cancer Union: The Nordic Cancer Union (NCU) unites Nordic cancer organizations to combat cancer and promote public health, fostering collaboration and sharing expertise across the region.



Klick here or scan the QR code to read more.

In the publication "Why the EU must act now to safeguard a tobacco- and nicotine-free future" you can learn more about the need for a comprehensive legislation on the European level and why the Nordic region is a unique example to learn from.

