

24 February 2026

Nordic cancer societies urge an update of the EU tobacco regulation

Dear President von der Leyen, dear Commissioner Várhelyi,

This month marks five years since the launch of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. Despite its ambitious objectives charting a clear course for public health, progress in tobacco control remains insufficient.

We, the Nordic Cancer Union, write to you to underscore the **urgent need to advance the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) and Tobacco Advertising Directive (TAD)**. The recently proposed Tobacco Taxation Directive (TTD) represents an important step forward in reducing tobacco demand, and we welcome this development. However, critical gaps remain, and these must be addressed if we are to fully protect health, prevent nicotine addiction, and close loopholes exploited by the tobacco industry.

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.

Therefore, the Nordic Cancer Union recommends:

Increase Prices & Limit Imports:

- Introduce higher minimum prices for all tobacco and nicotine products through the TTD.
- 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.

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.

Empower Member States to Act:

- Reaffirm and strengthen the right of MS 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 tobacco and nicotine products.

For a more comprehensive overview of our key positions regarding the EU tobacco framework, please refer to our [policy recommendations](#).

Updating the TPD and the TAD without delay is a vital step toward realising the objectives of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the Safe Hearts Plan. The Nordic cancer societies stand ready to support the Commission in this important work.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross, Secretary General, The Norwegian Cancer Society

Juha Pekka Turunen, Secretary General, The Finnish Cancer Society

Ulrika Årehed Kågström, Secretary General, The Swedish Cancer Society

Jesper Fisker, Secretary General, The Danish Cancer Society

Halla Þorvaldsdóttir, Secretary General, The Icelandic Cancer Society