



World No Tobacco Day 2014: Raise taxes on tobacco

CONGRATULATIONS TO COMMISSIONER BORG, JAMES REILLY TD AND VYTENIS ANDRIUKAITIS ON THE AWARD OF THEIR WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY 2014 PRIZE

BRUSSELS, 28 May 2014

The Smoke Free Partnership (SFP) would like to congratulate EU Health Commissioner Tonio Borg, Irish Health Minister James Reilly TD and Lithuanian Health Minister Vytenis Andriukaitis on the award of their World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) prize for their outstanding contribution to the revision of the 2001 Tobacco Products Directive (TPD). The considerable progress made in the area of FCTC implementation in the 28 EU Member States as a result of the adoption of the new Tobacco Products Directive in April would have been unimaginable without their tireless work, commitment to and belief in the need for strong tobacco control measures across Europe.

SFP would also like to commend the significant contribution of Linda McAvan MEP and her team for their dedication and pragmatism in securing consensus in the European Parliament which was essential for the successful passage of the TPD and for the subsequent protection of countless European citizens from the harm caused by tobacco.

Nearly six million people die from tobacco-related illness every year and 700,000 of those come from the EU alone. This year, [World No Tobacco Day \(WNTD\) 2014](#) calls on governments to increase taxation on tobacco. Raising tax on tobacco is a key element in the fight against the global tobacco epidemic and is enshrined in the FCTC under Article 6. In EU Member States, minimum excise rates are set by EU legislation but huge price discrepancies remain among individual Member States: The highest weighted average price of cigarettes can be found in Ireland at €8.92 and the lowest at €2.36 in Bulgaria.¹ These price differences contribute to health inequalities which are avoidable.

Given the proven effect of tax increases on reducing the consumption of tobacco, SFP seconds the WHO's call to European governments and the EU institutions to increase tobacco taxation on all tobacco products to a level that effectively curbs tobacco use. The application of tax increases on all tobacco products is essential in order to avoid the possibility, especially among young and poor people, of switching to lower-cost alternatives such as roll-your-own (fine cut) tobacco or cheaper categories of cigarettes following tax increases.

Notes to editors

The [Smoke Free Partnership](#) is a strategic, independent and flexible partnership between [Cancer Research UK](#), the [European Heart Network](#) and [Action on Smoking and Health \(UK\)](#). It aims to promote tobacco control advocacy and policy research at EU and national levels in collaboration with other EU health organisations and EU tobacco control networks.

¹ Joossens, L. & Raw, M. (2014) [The Tobacco Control Scale 2013 in Europe](#). ECL: Association of European Cancer Leagues.

For further information on the importance of tobacco taxation, please take a look at SFP's [TobTaxy toolkit](#), available in 20 European languages, which sets out the basics of tobacco taxation and the steps that the public health community can take to advocate for policy change in the sphere of tobacco taxation. The WHO also provides further resources on its [WNTD 2014](#) website.

More information on the EU's current tobacco tax legislation can be found on DG TAXUD's website [here](#).

Media enquires

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