

## Over 120 Organisations Back Health Ministers' Urgent Call to Revise EU Tobacco Directives

**Brussels, [14/04/2025]** –The Smoke Free Partnership (SFP) Coalition, the European Respiratory Society (ERS), the European Cancer Organisation (ECO), and the European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP) have joined forces to express their full support for the 12 EU Member States urging the European Commission to revise the Tobacco Products Directive, the Tobacco Advertising Directive, and the Tobacco Taxation Directive without further delay.

As leading European voices in public and respiratory health, and cancer prevention, the aforementioned organisations strongly align with the urgent call to action by 12 national ministers to reinforce EU tobacco control measures and prevent a resurgence of tobacco-related harm. Without updated legislation, Europe risks reversing the progress made in reducing tobacco use and protecting citizens, especially young people, from addiction, preventable cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

Tobacco consumption remains the **leading cause of preventable death** in the EU, claiming over **700,000 lives annually** and accounting for **27% of all cancer cases**. While the 2014 revision of the Tobacco Products Directive led to some reduction in smoking rates, recent data show a concerning trend. According to the 2024 Eurobarometer, **traditional cigarette use among 15–24-year-olds has risen from 20% to 22%** between 2020 and 2023. **E-cigarette use increased from 4% to 6%**, and the popularity of **heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches** continues to grow among young people.

The SFP, ERS, ECO and ENSP stress that these alarming trends **directly undermine the goal of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**, which aims to create a "Tobacco-Free Generation" by 2040. If the EU wants to meet its commitment to cancer prevention and health promotion, it must take swift and coordinated action to modernise tobacco control legislation. The **continued delay in revising the core EU tobacco control directives is deeply alarming**. This legislative stagnation has opened the door for the tobacco and nicotine industry to exploit regulatory gaps, aggressively promoting novel products, especially to young people. Without urgent updates, the EU undermines its own public health goals and reversing the significant progress achieved over the past decade.

By standing alongside the 12 EU Member States, the SFP Coalition, ERS, ECO, and ENSP reaffirm their united commitment to advancing tobacco control, and ensuring the EU delivers on its cancer prevention promises.

**The time to act is now. Every delay puts more lives at risk and undermines Europe's ability to meet its own commitments.**

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### **About Smoke Free Partnership**

SFP's vision is a world free from the death and suffering caused by tobacco consumption. SFP's mission is the effective implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). To this end, the SFP works with decision makers to ensure that tobacco control receives adequate political attention at EU level and to promote tobacco control information and policy research at EU and national level, in collaboration with other EU health organizations and tobacco control networks. It also aims to ensure FCTC implementation globally and is working to release EU funding for tobacco control to counter poverty in developing countries.