

## *Joint Public Statement*

# Health community urges EU Finance Ministers to back a strong Tobacco Taxation Directive

**Brussels, 8 October 2025** — On **Friday 10 October 2025**, EU finance ministers meeting at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (**ECOFIN**) will hear the European Commission's proposal to modernise the **Tobacco Taxation Directive (TTD)**. Each year, **tobacco kills 1.1 million people in the WHO European Region**, being a leading cause of cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory disease. Of those, 153,000 die from exposure to second-hand smoke.

We, the undersigned organisations representing more than 100 organisations of healthcare professionals, and patient groups in Europe, call on all Member States to **support an ambitious update** that protects public health by:

- **Raising EU-wide minimum excise rates**, reducing affordability and driving down tobacco and nicotine use, especially among young people;
- **Extending the EU framework to all nicotine products** — including e-cigarettes, heated tobacco and nicotine pouches — and brings **raw tobacco under excise control** to tighten supply-chain oversight;
- **Introducing regular indexation updates** to minimum rates and **reducing cross-border price gaps** that undermine the Single Market.

Independent and official assessments indicate the reform would deliver **major health and fiscal gains**: approximately **12 million fewer smokers** in the first year, a **drop in smoking prevalence from 24% to ~20.8%**, and deterring young people from taking up smoking, alongside substantial new excise revenues with limited impact on overall inflation. These are the relevant, evidence-based figures for public decision-making — not company-commissioned “economic footprint” numbers that tally gross activity rather than net societal benefit. Patients and healthcare providers alike support policies that make quitting easier and prevent young people from starting to smoke or use nicotine.

This reform also **modernises product definitions and categories** (including cigarillos/cigars, heated tobacco, waterpipe, e-liquid and nicotine pouches) and **phases in** the rules from **1 January 2028** with time-limited transitions, giving administrations and businesses predictability while protecting health and revenues.

**Competitiveness matters**: the TTD update is a **rules-based, effective way to raise predictable national revenue** without taxing work or investment; as people spend less on tobacco, spending shifts toward other sectors, supporting jobs and productivity, while harmonised minima reduce Single-Market distortions that penalise compliant firms.

Taken together, these measures advance the EU health and disease prevention agenda, strengthen the Single Market, bring Europe closer to a smoke-free generation, and safeguard Member State budgets.

**We urge EU Finance Ministers to maintain ambitious minimum rates, ensure robust coverage of new products, keep transition periods as short as possible, and adopt regular, meaningful updates so the policy remains effective over time.**

## Signatories:

European Respiratory Society (ERS)  
European Lung Foundation (ELF)  
Smoke Free Partnership (SFP)  
European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP)  
Impact Unfiltered  
European Society of Cardiology (ESC)  
European Heart Network (EHN)  
European Cancer Organisation (ECO)  
Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

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