

Open Letter to the European Commission, DG SANTE

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Brussels, Belgium

Open letter from consumer organisations on the TPD evaluation and the future of EU nicotine policy

Dear President von der Leyen, Commissioner Várhelyi, and officials of DG SANTE,

We, the undersigned consumer organisations representing thousands of citizens across Europe, are deeply concerned by the European Commission's evaluation report of the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) and the direction it sets for the upcoming revision.

The evaluation acknowledges that current measures have delivered only modest reductions in smoking but nevertheless guides policymaking towards much tighter restrictions on alternative nicotine products such as vapes, heated tobacco, nicotine pouches and innovative products to come. It does so while downplaying the growing body of scientific evidence that these smoke-free products are significantly less harmful than cigarettes and can help adult smokers quit when they are accessible, affordable, and appropriately regulated.

At the same time, the evaluation fails to sufficiently recognise the success of Member States like Sweden, the Czech Republic, and Greece, which have recorded some of the fastest declines in smoking in Europe by allowing adults to switch to lower-risk alternatives. Instead of learning from these examples, the report points towards flavour bans, disposable bans, lower nicotine caps, and near-uniform packaging rules that would make reduced-risk products less attractive and less effective for smokers, while treating them almost like combustible tobacco.

For the forthcoming TPD revision, we respectfully call on the European Commission and DG SANTE to rethink this approach and to:

- 1. Put consumers at the centre:** Systematically involve smokers, ex-smokers, and their representative organisations in consultations, hearings, and impact assessments related to TPD3.
- 2. Apply a risk-proportionate framework:** Acknowledge the continuum of risk between combustible and non-combustible products and ensure that regulation, communication, and taxation are proportionate to that risk, rather than treating all nicotine products the same.
- 3. Protect effective harm-reduction tools for adults:** Safeguard adult access to a wide variety of products, flavours, and nicotine strengths that are crucial for successful switching, while strictly enforcing age-verification rules to protect minors.

4. **Learn from Member State success stories:** Integrate the experience of Sweden, the Czech Republic, Greece, and other countries that have reduced smoking rapidly by embracing harm reduction, rather than restricting it.
5. **Guarantee transparent, unbiased evidence-gathering:** Ensure that future evaluations and expert work are transparently governed, free from conflicts of interest, and open to scrutiny by all stakeholders, including consumer groups.

The EU's goal of a tobacco-free generation will not be reached by making safer alternatives harder to obtain or less appealing than cigarettes. Tobacco harm reduction is not a slogan; it is a practical, evidence-based strategy that has already improved the lives and health of millions of Europeans.

We therefore urge you to use the TPD revision as an opportunity to build a genuinely evidence-based, risk-proportionate framework that accelerates the decline in smoking, respects consumer choice, and recognises the crucial role of alternative nicotine products in achieving better public health outcomes.

Sincerely,

CROHM (Croatia)

<https://crohm.hr/>



Considerate Pouchers

<https://consideratepouchers.org/>



Consumer Choice Center (Global)

<https://consumerchoicecenter.org/>



Generacija brez dima (Slovenia)

<https://www.facebook.com/gbdslo>



Generace Bez Koure (Czech Republic)

<https://www.generacebezkoure.cz/>



Greek Vapers Alliance (Greece)

<https://greekvapersalliance.gr/>



World Vapers' Alliance (Global)

<https://worldvapersalliance.com/>

