

Factual summary report of the public consultation on the revision of EU rules on tobacco products and tobacco advertising

Disclaimer: This document should be regarded solely as a summary of the contributions made by stakeholders in the context of the public consultation on the revision of EU rules on tobacco products and tobacco advertising. It cannot in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the Commission or its services. **Responses to the consultation activities cannot be considered as a representative sample of the views of the EU population.**

1. Introduction

The public consultation was open from 22 May to 14 August 2026 on the “[Have Your Say](#)” portal. It aimed to collect insights, views and evidence from the general public and stakeholders¹ to support the impact assessment for the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive (Directive 2014/40/EU) and the Tobacco Advertising Directive (Directive 2003/33/EC).

A total of 41,694 submissions were received, out of which 35,678 (85.6%) replied under the category of ‘EU citizen’. Following the removal of one exact duplicate, 41,693 submissions were retained for the analysis. A statistical overview of the respondents by category and country is available in the ‘[Consultation outcome](#)’ section of the [Have your say portal](#).

2. Overview of the responses

In total, 41,693 contributions were considered for this report. Campaign contributions were retained within this total and are analysed separately in Section 3.4, in line with Tool #54 of the [Better Regulation Toolbox](#). Breaking down by stakeholder category, citizens were the largest contributor group, accounting for 39,794 of the 41,693 contributions (95.4%) of which 35,677 came from EU citizens and 4,117 from non-EU citizens. Economic operators submitted 1,236 contributions (3.0%), comprising 1,079 companies/businesses and 157 business associations. The “Other” category accounted for 376 contributions (0.9%). Civil society organisations submitted 254 contributions (0.6%): 135 NGOs, 59 academic/research institutions, 33 consumer organisations, 22 trade unions and 5 environmental organisations. Public authorities submitted 33 contributions (0.1%). Responses were received from all 27 EU Member States, with 37,219 contributions (89.3%) originating from EU Member States and 4,474 (10.7%) coming from 92 non-EU countries. Contributions were submitted in 24 languages, most frequently in Polish (14,215; 34.1%), Swedish (4,584; 11.0%), English (3,824; 9.2%), Czech (3,228; 7.7%) and Spanish (2,697; 6.5%).

Among the 39,794 respondents who submitted their contributions as citizens, 25,988 (65.3%) were aged 30–65, followed by 9,829 (24.7%) aged 15–29, 1,922 (4.8%) aged 15 or under and 1,402 (3.5%) aged over 65. 653 (1.6%) did not answer. Of the citizen respondents, 23,560 (59.2%) identified themselves as current or former users of tobacco, nicotine or non-nicotine products.

Among the 1,899 respondents in the remaining categories, micro-organisations with fewer than 10 employees represented 61.9% (1,175), small organisations with 10–49 employees 10.7% (203), medium-sized organisations with 50–249 employees 7.6% (145), while large organisations with 250 or more employees represented 19.8% (376).

Regarding financial support from the tobacco industry, 169 of the 787 respondents from business associations, civil society organisations and the ‘Other’ category (21.5%) reported having received such support during the previous five years.

¹ Stakeholder categories are self-declared by respondents when contributing through the Have Your Say portal.

Finally, 954 contributions (2.3%) included a supporting document.

3. Results

3.1 Campaign analysis

A campaign, according to the [Better Regulation Toolbox](#), refers to contributions that are the same or very similar, reflecting a coordinated effort to encourage a particular type of response; as a rule of thumb, ten or more identical or near-identical contributions are treated as a campaign.

In line with this approach, all contributions were screened for identical answer patterns across the closed questions of the questionnaire². This screening identified 32 campaigns, comprising 196 groups of ten or more fully identical responses and totalling 14,418 contributions (34.6% of 41,693). The largest campaign comprised 6,048 contributions (14.5% of 41,693), submitted almost entirely from Poland the second largest comprised 4,877 contributions (11.7%), almost entirely from Spain; and the third largest comprised 1,036 contributions (2.5%), predominantly from North Macedonia, with smaller shares from Brazil and other countries. Of the 32 campaigns, 27, accounting for 14,233 contributions (34.1% of 41,693), were classified as opposing stricter regulation, while four campaigns (166 contributions; 0.4%) were classified as leaning against it. The remaining campaign (19 contributions) answered predominantly “Don’t know” across the closed questions and therefore expressed no discernible viewpoint.

Four campaigns contained identical suggested text in the open questions, and identical formulations also recurred in the free-text fields of otherwise unrelated contributions.

3.2 Overview of the responses

Responses varied substantially across stakeholder groups. At aggregate level, 22,964 respondents (55.1% of 41,693) disagreed or partly disagreed that measures and policies aimed at protecting people from the effects of tobacco and nicotine consumption and from second-hand smoke and aerosols are beneficial for society. By contrast, 5,493 respondents (13.2%) agreed or partly agreed, 12,167 (29.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 1,069 (2.6%) answered “Don’t know”.

Regarding whether tobacco-control measures are beneficial for society, respondents generally disagreed or partly disagreed. Regarding whether differing national laws hinder the functioning of the single market, 72.1% disagreed or partly disagreed, 22.1% agreed or partly agreed and 2.3% answered “Don't know”. Regarding whether a mechanism is needed to allow a faster regulatory response to market developments, 82.1% disagreed or partly disagreed, 11.5% agreed or partly agreed and 2.4% answered “Don't know”.

Optional free-text fields allowed respondents to provide additional answers not covered by the predefined response options. In total, 1,314 respondents (3.2%) provided an optional free-text field. They mostly specified additional products considered attractive to young people³ (639 entries) and

² The number of campaigns and contributions identified depends on the parameters used for the screening: in line with the Better Regulation Toolbox, a group of at least ten contributions with identical answers across all closed questions was treated as a campaign, and groups agreeing on at least 95% of the questions answered by both were attributed to the same campaign (variants of one suggested answer sheet differing only through questionnaire routing). The screening was performed through deterministic, scripted pattern matching, with AI tools used to assist in developing the scripts; no AI-based content analysis of individual contributions was carried out.

³ Young people refer to persons aged 10 to 24 years.

additional channels through which young people obtain tobacco, nicotine and non-nicotine products (around 400 entries per product category). Illicit or informal sales channels were by far the most recurrent specification.

A similar pattern was observed for the optional fields inviting businesses to quantify the adjustment costs of six labelling and packaging measures as a percentage of turnover. Only 11 of the 1,079 company/business respondents (1.0%) completed at least one of these fields, and only four (0.4%) provided a value that could plausibly be interpreted as a percentage of turnover. This number is too small to support a quantitative estimate of adjustment costs.

3.3 Results by questionnaire theme

3.3.1 Profiling & Behaviour

Respondents were asked about tobacco, nicotine and non-nicotine product use, age of initiation, products considered appealing to young people and people aged over 25, and the channels through which young people obtain these products. Questions about respondents' own use and age of initiation are reported below for EU and non-EU citizen respondents only.

Of the 23,560 citizen respondents who identified themselves as current or former users, 23,460 (99.6%) answered at least one question about their age of initiation. Among the 22,807 who answered the question about tobacco products, 13,095 (57.4%) reported starting between the ages of 16 and 24. Across the three questions about when young people begin using tobacco, nicotine and non-nicotine products, a predefined age range rather than 'Don't know' was selected in 33.6% of responses from citizens and 84.8% of responses from public authorities. Cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco were most frequently selected by EU-citizen respondents as appealing to young people (71.4%). Nicotine e-cigarettes were most frequently selected by public authorities (81.8%) and NGOs (73.3%) as appealing to young people, followed by nicotine pouches (48.5% and 52.6%, respectively). Cigarettes were most frequently selected as appealing to people aged over 25.

Among citizen respondents, friends (74.5%) and informal or black-market sellers (56.0%) were the most frequently identified channels through which young people obtain tobacco products. Fewer than 5% of EU-citizen respondents selected online sellers or social media, compared with around 45% of public authorities and NGOs. Public authorities and NGOs also selected retail shops more frequently. Among companies/businesses, friends and informal or black-market sellers were the most frequently selected channels across the three product categories, with the respective percentages ranging from 43.2% to 53.3% and from 42.2% to 52.1%. Business associations showed a similar pattern, with friends selected by 35.0%–38.9% and informal or black-market sellers by 27.4%–31.2%, depending on the product category.

3.3.2 Market & Regulation

72.1% of all respondents disagreed or partly disagreed that differing national laws create legal complexities and hinder the functioning of the single market. In addition, 74.6% disagreed or partly disagreed that young people's exposure to new forms of digital promotion of tobacco and nicotine products influences their uptake. Most respondents also disagreed that further EU action was needed in relation to user-generated content (78.4%) and brand or corporate promotion, including promotion by influencers (73.2%).

Responses differed across stakeholder categories. EU-citizen respondents generally disagreed or partly disagreed with these statements, while public authorities, NGOs and academic/research institutions generally agreed or partly agreed. Among companies/businesses, 60.8% agreed or partly agreed that differing national laws hinder the functioning of the single market.

Public authorities, NGOs and academic/research institutions generally considered that digital promotion affects young users and that further EU action is needed. Most EU- and non-EU-citizen respondents did not consider that market and consumption trends had increased the availability, popularity and use of novel tobacco products across all age groups. Conversely, 88% of public authorities and 73% of NGOs considered that such an increase had occurred, particularly among young people.

Among companies/businesses, 54.0% agreed or partly agreed that market developments had increased the availability, popularity and use of novel tobacco products among young people, while 49.7% agreed or partly agreed that a mechanism enabling the Commission to respond more rapidly to market developments was needed. The corresponding figures for business associations were 21.0% and 19.1%, respectively. Most respondents, apart from public authorities, NGOs and academic/research institutions, did not consider prohibiting flavours in e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches to strengthen the functioning of the internal market or the protection of public health. Among companies/businesses, 58.9% disagreed or partly disagreed this prohibition would strengthen the functioning of the internal market or protect public health (59.8%). The corresponding figures for business associations were 63.7% and 59.2%, respectively.

3.3.3 Traceability & Enforcement

Most respondents (68.7%) did not support extending the EU traceability system for tobacco products to other product categories. A further 13.5% were in favour and 14.6% answered “Don’t know”. EU- and non-EU-citizen respondents mostly opposed such an extension, while public authorities, NGOs and academic/research institutions were mostly in favour.

Company/business respondents leaned towards supporting the extension of the EU traceability system, with 53.4% in favour and 27.9% opposed. Business associations (51.6% opposed; 24.2% in favour), consumer organisations (48.5% opposed; 33.3% in favour) and trade unions (50.0% opposed; 31.8% in favour) were more likely to oppose this extension rather than support it. Respondents from environmental organisations also tended to oppose, although this respondent category comprised only five contributions.

NGOs, public authorities and academic/research institutions generally considered it highly important that manufacturers and importers report accurate and complete information. Among EU-citizen respondents, 34.2% considered these measures not important or barely important, 6.9% moderately important and 7.7% very important or essential, while 51.2% answered “Don't know”. Among non-EU-citizen respondents, 65.9% considered this objective to be of low importance. Company/business respondents were more evenly divided, with 31.7% considering strengthening this area as not important or barely important, 22.2% as moderately important and 31.4% as very important or essential; 14.6% answered “Don’t know”.

Traceability tools for detecting illicit trade were considered highly important by most respondents from NGOs (68.1%), public authorities (63.6%), academic/research institutions (52.5%) and companies/businesses (49.8%). Conversely, 64.4% of non-EU-citizen respondents considered such tools to be of low importance. A similar pattern was observed for the importance of ensuring that the legislation can adapt to new market developments.

3.3.4 Attitudes on Product Measures

Most respondents from public authorities (84.8%), NGOs (77.8%) and academic/research institutions (78.0%) agreed or partly agreed that EU tobacco-control measures contribute to protecting people and are therefore beneficial to society. By contrast, 59.1% of EU-citizen respondents disagreed or partly disagreed. Views among companies/businesses and business associations were more mixed. Company/business respondents were evenly divided between agreement (38.8%) and disagreement (39.3%), while 31.8% of business-association respondents agreed and 26.1% disagreed or partly disagreed.

Stakeholder groups also differed in the importance they assigned to the objectives of EU tobacco-control legislation. Public authorities, NGOs and academic/research institutions generally attached greater importance to preventing initiation, supporting cessation, and ensuring that products do not contain features that are particularly attractive to young people. Companies/businesses and business associations attached comparatively greater importance to minimising the administrative burden on businesses and ensuring consistent conditions for the manufacture, presentation, sale and advertising of products.

Respondents were also asked about the effectiveness of different measures in reducing uptake or the harmful effects of nicotine and non-nicotine products. Public authorities, NGOs and academic/research institutions generally rated the proposed measures as effective more frequently than citizens and economic operators. Across the measures assessed, the share of respondents who agreed or partly agreed that the measures were effective varied as follows: 66.7%–87.9% among public authorities, 60.0%–85.9% among NGOs and 42.4%–88.1% among academic/research institutions. The corresponding ranges were 5.6%–66.7% among EU-citizen respondents, 9.6%–45.9% among business associations and 12.7%–58.4% among companies/businesses.

Companies/businesses were asked about the expected operational effects and costs of different product measures. Prohibiting flavours was considered the measure with the greatest effect and cost, with 67.4% of companies/businesses reporting a high or significant effect and 52.8% a high or significant cost. Prohibiting flavour descriptors and reducing nicotine concentrations were also considered to have a high or significant effect by 57.7% and 50.8% of respondents, respectively. Business associations anticipated higher costs than companies/businesses for certain measures, including ingredient restrictions (48.4% compared with 38.9%). Respondents from both companies/businesses and business associations indicated that they would require at least 12 months to comply and prioritised standardised templates and clearer guidance.

Stakeholders also differed on whether the legislation adequately covers market developments. EU-citizen respondents generally did not see a regulatory gap: 80.0% disagreed or partly disagreed that the legislation's scope had failed to keep pace with market developments. By contrast, 81.8% of public authorities and 71.9% of NGOs agreed or partly agreed. EU-citizen respondents most

frequently rated the inclusion of devices and accessories as “not important” or “barely important” (51.1%). Public authorities (69.7%–78.8%) and NGOs (61.5%–70.4%) rated the inclusion of the five product categories as “very important” or “essential”, depending on the category.

3.3.5 Packaging and Advertising

Respondents were asked whether technology-neutral product definitions are important for achieving the objectives of the tobacco-control legislation. Overall, 34.0% were in favour, 28.5% were opposed and 32.5% answered “Don’t know”. Most respondents from NGOs (80.7%), academic/research institutions (62.7%) and public authorities (75.8%) were in favour. Company/business respondents also leaned towards support, with 36.6% in favour and 26.7% opposed. Business associations leaned more towards opposition or uncertainty, with 31.8% opposed and 35.0% answering “Don’t know”. EU-citizen respondents were more evenly divided, with 30.7% in favour, 29.1% opposed and 36.0% answering “Don’t know”.

Respondents were also asked whether mandatory plain or standardised packaging requirements would strengthen the functioning of the EU internal market or better protect public health. Regarding the internal-market objective, 85.8% of all respondents were opposed, including 86.7% of EU-citizen respondents and 93.1% of non-EU-citizen respondents. Most respondents from NGOs (64.4%) and public authorities (69.7%) were in favour, while academic/research institutions were almost evenly divided, with 42.4% in favour and 40.7% opposed. Companies/businesses and business associations were predominantly opposed.

A similar pattern was observed regarding the public-health objective, with 80.7% of all respondents opposed. Non-EU-citizen respondents were divided between opposition (45.6%) and “Don’t know” responses (49.4%).

Respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of six specific packaging and labelling measures. Citizen respondents generally considered these measures to be ineffective, with opposition ranging from 74.7% to 87.3%, depending on the measure. Respondents from NGOs, public authorities and academic/research institutions generally considered the measures effective. For large health warnings, in particular, 65.9% of NGOs, 75.8% of public authorities and 50.8% of academic/research institutions considered the measure effective. Companies/businesses and business associations generally did not consider the six measures to be effective. Depending on the measure, opposition ranged from 40.0% to 66.7% among companies/businesses and from 39.5% to 71.3% among business associations.

3.4 Analysis of attachments

Of the 41,693 contributions, 954 (2.3%) included an uploaded supporting file⁴. Most uploads came from individual citizens (628 of 954; 65.8%), followed by companies/businesses (103), business associations (73), NGOs (68) and the remaining organisation categories.

Attachments from business associations, companies, trade unions and grower and retailer organisations generally cautioned against measures they considered overly restrictive, particularly flavour bans, plain packaging and the uniform treatment of all product categories. They highlighted

⁴ In addition, 13 attachments submitted as zip archives could not be processed.

potential socio-economic and employment effects, the risk of expanding illicit trade, and the need for transition periods and an impact assessment, while generally supporting risk-differentiated regulation of non-combustible alternatives.

Attachments from NGOs and public authorities supported a broad revision aligned with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, encompassing tobacco, nicotine and associated products, including products containing synthetic nicotine and disposable products. They supported more stringent rules on flavours, packaging and advertising, together with safeguards against industry interference.

Academic and research institutions submitted contributions referring to scientific evidence that identified combustion as the primary source of harm and supported risk-proportionate regulation combined with youth-protection measures. Some also called for further evaluation of flavourings and the long-term implications of their use.

Citizens' attachments most often supported proportionate, risk-based rules that would preserve adult access to products they considered less harmful, combined with the protection of minors through age verification and enforcement against illicit sales. A similar picture emerged from the many short personal statements and letters attached mainly by individual consumers. These most frequently described e-cigarettes and other alternatives as products that the contributor considered less harmful and that had helped them stop smoking. They also expressed concerns that bans or flavour restrictions could push consumers towards the illicit market and specifically supported the continued availability of waterpipe tobacco. A smaller number supported stricter restrictions to protect young people.