



10 key changes for tobacco products sold in the EU

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10 key changes for tobacco products sold in the EU(*)

1) Larger and mandatory pictorial health warnings

Graphic health warnings with photos, text and cessation information will cover 65% of the front and the back of cigarette and roll-your-own tobacco (RYO) packs(**). Depicting the social and health impacts of smoking, the warnings are designed to discourage people from smoking or encourage them to quit. The warnings are grouped in three sets, to be rotated every year, to ensure that they retain their impact for as long as possible. The design of the warnings on cigarettes and RYO tobacco are laid out in a [Commission Implementing Decision](#). See the [mock-up](#) of the new cigarette packs.

2) Ban on cigarettes and RYO with characterising flavours

Cigarettes and RYO tobacco products may no longer have characterising flavours such as menthol, vanilla or candy that mask the taste and smell of tobacco(***). In the case of products with more than a 3% market share (e.g. menthol), the ban will apply as of 2020.

A procedure for determining whether a tobacco product has a characterising flavour has been established, and an independent advisory panel will be set up to assist the Commission and Member States in this respect.

3) Replacement of TNCO labelling

The tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide (TNCO) labelling on cigarettes and RYO tobacco will now be replaced with an information message that informs consumers that 'Tobacco smoke contains over 70 substances known to cause cancer.' Research has shown that TNCO labelling is misleading to consumers as it makes them believe that some products are less risky to their health. The new information message will more accurately reflect the true health consequences of smoking.

4) No more promotional or misleading packages

Cigarette packs must have a cuboid shape to ensure visibility of the combined health warnings. Slim packs and other irregular shaped packs will no longer be allowed. Packs containing less than 20 cigarettes are also banned. Packs of 10, which are particularly appealing to young age groups with limited spending power, will therefore, disappear from the market(^).

Promotional and/or misleading features or elements are not allowed on tobacco packages. References to lifestyle benefits, taste or flavourings, special offers, suggestions that a particular product is less harmful than another, or has improved biodegradability or other environmental advantages, will no longer be possible.

5) Mandatory electronic reporting on ingredients

To gather more information on the ingredients contained in tobacco products and their effects on health and addiction, manufacturers and importers of tobacco products are required to report on ingredients in all products they place on the EU market through a [standardised electronic format](#). Certain frequently used substances where there are initial indications to suggest that they contribute to the toxicity, addictiveness or result in characterising flavours in cigarettes and RYO tobacco will be subject to more detailed reporting requirements.

6) Safety and quality requirements for e-cigarettes

The Tobacco Products Directive does not ban e-cigarettes. See [here](#) to correct any other misconceptions about what will change. Instead, for the first time, certain safety and quality requirements have been introduced for e-cigarettes containing nicotine.

First and foremost, because nicotine is a toxic substance, the [Directive](#) sets maximum nicotine concentrations and maximum volumes for cartridges, tanks and nicotine liquid containers. E-cigarettes should be child-resistant and tamper proof and have a mechanism that ensures refilling without spillage to protect consumers. E-cigarette ingredients must be of high purity and e-cigarettes should deliver the same amount of nicotine for puffs of the same strength and duration.

7) Packaging and labelling rules for e-cigarettes

Health warnings for e-cigarettes become mandatory advising consumers that e-cigarettes contain nicotine and should not be used by non-smokers.

Packaging must also include a list of all ingredients contained in the product, information on the product's nicotine content and a leaflet setting out instructions for use and information on adverse effects, risk groups and addictiveness and toxicity.

Promotional elements are not allowed on e-cigarette packaging and cross-border advertising and promotion of e-cigarettes is prohibited.

8) Monitoring and reporting of developments related to e-cigarettes

As e-cigarettes are a relatively new product for which evidence is only starting to emerge, the Directive lays down monitoring and reporting requirements for manufacturers and importers, Member States and the Commission:

- E-cigarette manufacturers must [notify Member States](#) of all products they place on the market and report annually to them on sales volumes, consumer preferences and trends.
- Member State authorities will monitor the market for any evidence that e-cigarettes lead to nicotine addiction or to tobacco consumption, especially in young people and non-smokers.
- The Commission will also present to the European Parliament and the Council the developments on e-cigarettes in its implementation report to be produced after five years.

9) Possibility to ban cross-border distance sales

EU countries may prohibit cross-border distance sales of tobacco products, which give consumers –including the very young – access to products that do not comply with the Directive. Should an EU country choose this option, the retail outlets in question cannot supply their products to consumers located in that country. Even if a Member State does not ban such sales, retail outlets must register with the competent authorities, both in the country where they are located, and in the country where they plan to sell their products.

10) Measures to combat illicit trade

New measures intended to combat the illegal trade in tobacco products include an EU-wide tracking and tracing system for the legal supply chain and a security feature composed of visible and invisible elements (e.g. holograms) which should help law enforcement bodies, national authorities and consumers detect illicit products.

These measures will be introduced for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco in 2019 and to tobacco products other than cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco in 2024.

For more information

[EU Tobacco Policy](#)

[EU Tobacco Products](#)

[Revision of the EU Tobacco Products Directive](#)

[Infographic](#)

[Questions & Answers: New rules for tobacco products](#)

() Whereas, the rules apply to all products manufactured from today, Member States may allow manufacturers an additional 12 months to sell old stock.*

*(**) The Tobacco Products Directive (Article 24) provides that Member States may take more stringent measures (i.e. plain packaging) provided these are proportionate and justified on the grounds of public health.*

*(***) Other products, such as cigars, cigarillos and snus are exempt from this ban.*

(^) Products that are put to sale before 20 May 2016 can still be sold in the EU until 2017.

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