



Brussels, 28th July 2011

## **Tobacco Products**

### **The European Commission publishes the report of a consultation which generated 85 000 responses**

The European Commission published the results of the public consultation on the upcoming revision of the Tobacco Products Directive. The public consultation generated an unprecedented 85.000 responses. The vast majority of contributions came from individual citizens, illustrating the great interest in EU tobacco control policy. Other respondents represented industry, non-governmental organisations, governments and public authorities.

Tobacco is the single largest cause of avoidable illness in the European Union (EU) and the estimated cause of death of over 650,000 people in the EU every year. At global level, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that tobacco use will kill nearly six million people this year alone. This figure could reach eight million by 2030 if steps are not taken to reverse this worrying trend. The need for action at EU level is therefore quite clear. A public consultation on the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive was launched last autumn in which respondents were asked to give their input on a number of policy options such as:

- Mandatory pictorial health warnings – or graphic images - on packs of tobacco;
- Plain or generic packaging;
- Regulating harmful and attractive substances in tobacco products; and
- Restricting or banning the sale of tobacco products over the internet and from vending machines.

Contributions varied significantly. For example, those in favour of mandatory pictorial health warnings and plain packaging stressed that these measures would significantly weaken the advertising effects of the packaging and provide equal protection for European citizens. Opponents, on the other hand, raised legal concerns arguing that these measures would have little or no impact on the uptake of smoking.



Those in favour of regulating ingredients said that restricting certain additives alongside sweet, fruity, floral, and candy flavours could prevent young people from taking up smoking and would facilitate intra-EU trade by bringing into line existing national regulations on ingredients. Opponents argued that regulating ingredients and additives would do little to prevent young people from taking up smoking and could discriminate against certain varieties and brands of tobacco.

The report is published by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers. The results of this consultation will be taken into account in the ongoing impact assessment which addresses the economic, social and health impacts as well as the feasibility of various policy options. The outcome of the impact assessment will be presented together with a legislative proposal due next year.

The outcome of the public consultation serves as useful input to the ongoing process of reviewing the Tobacco Products Directive.

Many participants provided very detailed responses, some which included new sources of information. Much of this work will be taken into account in the ongoing impact assessment addressing the economic, social and health impacts as well as the legal feasibility of different policy options. The outcome of this analysis will be presented together with the legislative proposal, which is due during the course of next year.

- The report summarizing the public consultation on the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive of 27 July 2011 is available [here](#).
- The text of the current Tobacco Products Directive (2001/37/EC) is available [here](#).
- The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is available [here](#).
- The European Commission Second Report on the Application of the Tobacco Products Directive of 27 November 2007 is available [here](#).
- Speech by Commissioner Dalli on social and health effects of the future revision of the tobacco products directive – 12 July 2011 – is available [here](#).