

Curbing the consumption of tobacco and nicotine-based products in Europe: What works?

EuroHealthNet Country Exchange Visit

Dates: 20 – 21 of November 2024

Venue: National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy ([NNGYK](#)), Szabolcs u. 33, 1135 Budapest, Hungary

Introduction

Tobacco use remains the largest preventable health risk in the European Union, causing nearly 700,000 deaths annually, with half of smokers facing premature mortality, losing an average of 14 years. Despite advancements in tobacco control, statistics reveal that 26% of the general population and a striking 29% of young Europeans continue to smoke. Notably, men and certain adolescent groups exhibit higher smoking rates. While there is a decline in traditional cigarette smoking among adolescents, the rise of new tobacco and nicotine products like heated tobacco, e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches poses a parallel health risk.^{1,2}

Socioeconomic factors strongly influence smoking behaviours, impacting initiation and cessation patterns across different life stages.³ Beyond health concerns, tobacco consumption and e-cigarettes pose environmental hazards, notably as cigarette litter and disposable vapes rank among the world's most pervasive and dangerous waste.^{4,5}

Guided by the [World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#) (WHO FCTC), countries are leveraging the [MPOWER measures](#) to effectuate robust tobacco control strategies. A comprehensive framework encompasses these measures:

¹ European Commission website, [Tobacco overview](#)

² OECD/European Union (2022), Health at a Glance: Europe 2022: State of Health in the EU Cycle, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/507433b0-en>.

³ Michael J. Green “[Comment: Yet another reason we need to tackle socioeconomic inequalities in smoking](#)”, The Lancet Regional Health - Europe 2022;23: 100520 Published online 29 September 2022

⁴ Louise Smith and Nikki Sutherland “[The environmental impact of disposable vapes](#)”, Commons Library Debate Pack, 28 November 2022,

⁵ Smoke Free Partnership [input](#) on the revision of the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC;

1. Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies.
2. Protect people from tobacco smoke.
3. Offer help to quit tobacco use.
4. Warn people about the dangers of tobacco.
5. Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.
6. Raise taxes on tobacco.

Over the past years, the European Union and Member States have implemented various policies aligning with the "Tobacco-Free Generation" goal of [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#). A mix of policies included increased taxes on tobacco products, restrictions on youth purchase, and more recently bans on characterising flavours in cigarettes and combined health warnings implemented under the Tobacco Products Directive (2014/40/EU). To further enforce the EU legislation on tobacco advertising, the European Commission recommends including new tobacco and nicotine-containing products and covering restrictions addressing social media channels.¹

In this context, this Country Exchange Visit (CEV), hosted by our member National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy ([NNGYK](#)) in Hungary, will enable representatives of national or regional public health agencies from across the EU to:

- Understand the current landscape with respect to the uptake and use of cigarettes and new products, like heated tobacco, e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches.
- Explore the state of play of current strategies and interventions to reduce the uptake and use of cigarettes and new tobacco and nicotine-based products:
 - What are the conflicts of interest (e.g., public health, commercial, cultural)?
 - What challenges remain, and why; what new challenges have emerged?
 - What kinds of measures have been effective, what are new opportunities for action?
- Exchange on equity dimension and distributional impacts of tobacco control policies and programmes.
- Identify how the sustainability agenda can help to advance the public health agenda around tobacco and nicotine consumption.
- Consider what can be done to dissuade future generations of consumers to take-up these products.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration among public health agencies across the EU.

As part of the Country Exchange Visit (CEV), we also aim to showcase successful Hungarian prevention programs that can serve as a model for participating countries. One of the programs, tailored for children in kindergartens and schools, is designed to raise awareness and instil a rejection of smoking and passive smoking from an early age. During the CEV, we will have the opportunity to visit a local Health Promotion Office in Budapest, where we will dive into the various components of this prevention program. Additionally, we will engage with colleagues working at the grassroots level, gaining valuable insights into their initiatives.

Moreover, we will hear about Hungary's quit smoking support system, including a novel initiative targeting the prison population. In autumn 2023, staff, psychologists, and reintegration officers from penitentiary institutions participated in specialised smoking cessation support training, followed by ongoing supervision. As part of the CEV, we will learn about the quit support program of the penitentiary institutions. This initiative aims to deliver effective smoking cessation support within prison settings, contributing to improved health outcomes and well-being for incarcerated individuals and staff.

Overall, participants will engage in discussions and exchanges centred around various policy and practice interventions, sharing effective strategies, and addressing the challenges of implementation, and what can be done, also collaboratively, to overcome them.

The Country Exchange Visit (CEV) is organised during the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the EU, which takes place from 1 July 2024 – 31 December 2024.

About Country Exchange Visits

EuroHealthNet Country Exchange Visits are member-only events that are open to senior delegates. Participants should be comfortable making contributions in English.

The aim is two-fold, namely (1) to exchange good practices and policies on selected core themes and showcase members' work to a selection of senior European colleagues and, at the same time, (2) discuss how related EU policy instruments may support at national, regional and local levels.

This event is free to attend, but places are limited. Travel and accommodation can be reimbursed for a limited number of participants, get in touch with [Anne Wagenführ-Leroy](#) to check your eligibility.

For any questions, please contact [Anne Wagenführ-Leroy](#).



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Agenda

Day 1 – 20 November 2024

Moderator: Anne Wagenführ-Leroy, EuroHealthNet

8:40 **Arrival/ Registration**

9.00 Welcome and introductions

- Dr Gábor Szászvai-Papp, Head of Unit of Focal Points, Department of Public Health, State Secretariat for Health, Ministry of Interior, Hungary
- Anne Wagenführ-Leroy, Programme Manager at EuroHealthNet
- Silvia Ganzerla, Policy Manager at EuroHealthNet
- Tour de table, expectations and needs

Theme 1. Public policies to reduce consumption of all forms of tobacco and novel nicotine products: effectiveness and challenges across Europe

9.45 **Setting the scene**, Dr Angela Ciobanu, Technical Officer at the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (online)

10.00 **Overview of the European policy agenda**, Cornel Radu-Loghin, Secretary General of the European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention aisbl

10.15 **Policy and practice implementation landscape in Hungary**, Tibor Demjén of the Hungarian Focal Point for Tobacco Control, and Zsolt Horváth, Eötvös Loránd University, HBSC research group⁶

10.45 **Break**

11.00 **Roundtable** interventions from EuroHealthNet members (5' per country) focusing on their key challenges in relation to the development and implementation of policies and strategies to reduce the consumption of all forms of tobacco and novel nicotine products. Has/ where has progress been impeded? Why?

⁶ Zsolt Horváth was supported by the EKÖP-24 University Excellence Scholarship Program of the Ministry For Culture And Innovation from the source of the National Research, Development And Innovation Fund

12.30 **Lunch**

13.45 **The equity dimension and distributional impacts of tobacco control policies and programmes**

- The evolution and achievements of smoking cessation support in Hungary, Dr Zsuzsa Cselkó, National Methodology Center for Smoking Cessation Support
- Tobacco control in the Netherlands and how this aims to impact on the differences in smoking between socio-economic groups, Marc Willemsen, Head of Tobacco Control department, Trimbos Institute, the Netherlands
- Discussion

14.45 **How the sustainability agenda can help to advance the public health agenda around tobacco and nicotine consumption**

- Introductory presentation by Anne Wagenführ-Leroyer, Programme Manager at EuroHealthNet to launch discussion
- Discussion

15.30 **Coffee break**

15.50 Family picture

Theme 2. How can we dissuade young people from taking up tobacco and nicotine-based products

15.55 **Presentations from the EuroHealthNet Thematic Working Group (TWIG) on Social Marketing and Addiction**

16.05 **Tobacco industry's tactics targeting the youth and digital marketing regulations**

- Tobacco industry tactics targeting the youth and other populations in Hungary, Dr Melinda Péntzes, Semmelweis University
- Discussion

17.15 End of the Day 1

19.00 **Dinner at Hősök Bistro, Dózsa György út 96, 1068 Budapest**

Day 2 – 21 November 2024

Theme 3. Tobacco and nicotine dependence treatment programmes

9.00 **Site visit 1:** St. Margaret Clinic - Óbuda Health Promotion Office (*Szent Margit Rendelőintézet - Óbudai Egészségfejlesztési Iroda*).

Address: Vörösvári út 88-96, 1032 Budapest.

The main elements of the prevention and cessation support programmes in Hungary will be presented and explained.

- The Focal Point for Tobacco Control and the NNGYK will jointly present the main elements of smoking prevention programmes in kindergartens and schools;
- The National Methodology Centre for Cessation Support operating at the National Koranyi Institute for Pulmonology will present the main elements of the cessation system of Hungary;
- The Health Promotion Office will talk about its tobacco control programmes at the local level.

11.00 **Site visit 2:** Capital City Penitentiary Institute.

Address: Maglódi út 24, 1108 Budapest

It will be an opportunity to see the work on smoking cessation support carried out by colleagues from the National Prison Service with the support of the Centre for Cessation Support staff.

13.00 **Lunch**

13.45 **What kinds of tobacco and nicotine dependence treatment programmes are most effective (evidence-based) and what can be done to ensure they reach those in lower socio-economic groups?**

Presentation followed by group discussion

14.20 **Moving forward – Member discussion** (*suggested questions*)

- Recommendations for programmes and activities for the next 5-20 years from the host and participants.
- Did you like any of the initiatives/policies/strategies discussed and would you suggest them to your colleagues back home?
- How can we work together?
- What EuroHealthNet TWIG on Social Marketing and Addictions could take on from the CEV?

14.45 Conclusions and Closing Remarks

From host, moderator and the participants.

15.00 End of visit



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