

! EMBARGOED UNTIL 09.00 am Tuesday 14 April 2015 !

“Smokefree policies in Europe. Are we there yet?” New SFP policy map answers “NO”

Tobacco control and public health experts call on Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia to urgently introduce 100% smokefree environments.

Brussels, 14 April 2015: The [new SFP interactive map of smokefree legislation](#) shows that several European countries are failing to adequately protect their citizens from tobacco smoke in public places.

During a breakfast seminar organised in Brussels by the Smoke Free Partnership, national and international tobacco control experts identified the best and the worst performing European countries in terms of smokefree legislation. These are marked on an interactive, user-friendly map which uses a specific methodology and colour coding to enable viewers to get a fast, comparative overview.

SFP analysed the smokefree legislation and compliance in 32 European countries (28 EU Member States, Norway, Turkey, Iceland and Switzerland) regarding three main areas: workplaces, bars and restaurants, and public transport. The performance of each EU Member State is marked on the European map by using a traffic-light style rating (green, light green, amber and red). This enables the viewer to see and compare if EU countries are meeting both components of good, clear, simple legislation and adequate enforcement as recommended in the **2009 Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments and in the Guidelines to Article 8 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.**

- In red on the map, **The Czech Republic, Romania, Greece, Austria and Slovakia** offer little or no protection from second-hand smoke due to weak or unenforced legislation. These countries must urgently and significantly improve their smokefree laws if they wish to honour their international and EU commitments.
- In amber on the map, **Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Estonia, Denmark, Croatia and Bulgaria** only partially meet their legal obligations and offer limited protection due to exemptions or poor compliance.
- In light green, **France, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden and Finland**, while not having 100% smokefree laws, enjoy strong enforcement and compliance rates leading to a high level of protection to their citizens.
- Countries coloured green have comprehensive and well-enforced legislation resulting in the strongest protection from second-hand smoke. In this category **Ireland, the United Kingdom, Spain, Hungary, Latvia, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway and Turkey** lead the ranking. These countries have enacted strong legislation that bans smoking in virtually all indoor workplaces and public places, including bars, pubs and restaurants. The laws are well enforced and enjoy a high level of public support.

The interactive map also gives information on countries that have gone further than the minimum requirements (for instance that have banned smoking in cars), on countries that are currently reviewing their legislation and on the regulation of e-cigarettes under smokefree laws, where such legislation exists.



Quotes:

“The findings of the smokefree map are very disappointing. We are not there yet and it is unacceptable that so many EU countries are still failing to protect their young people and their citizens against the dangers of tobacco smoke. The experience of the leading countries has proven that smokefree laws are effective, popular, enforceable and inexpensive. Countries that are not doing well should remember that the public support for smokefree laws is extremely high, even among smokers. For example, in Ireland, researchers found that 83 percent of smokers reported that the smokefree law was a “good” or “very good” thing”, **said Florence Berteletti, Director of the Smoke Free Partnership.**

“Smokefree laws are a simple way to protect the health of our citizens. With the experience amassed by other countries, such laws are straightforward and cost-effective to put in place. Many European countries, particularly Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia need to live up to their obligations under the FCTC.” **said Archie Turnbull, SFP President.**

“Experience from around the world shows that the only real way to protect the population from the toxic effects of second-hand smoke is to completely eliminate tobacco smoke in all enclosed spaces. We know that where such laws have been implemented, there has been an immediate and substantial reduction in admission rates for acute myocardial infarction” **said Susanne Løgstrup, from the European Heart Network.**

“Spain was once infamous for its so-called “Spanish model” which promoted a voluntary approach to introducing smokefree policies in hospitality venues. After this proved highly ineffective, Spain moved to a more comprehensive approach and now operates some of the strongest legislation in the EU. However, across the Spanish border, Portugal is still failing to protect its citizens in the same way, citing unfounded economic fears for its reluctance to introduce 100% smokefree legislation in the near future. This is unacceptable” **said Dr Sofia Ravara, Coordinator of the Portuguese NGO tobacco control movement.**

Notes to journalists

Article 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), signed in June 2003 by all WHO members, and so far ratified by 180 Parties, **including the EU and all the 28 Member States**, creates a legal obligation for its Parties to adopt and implement in areas of existing national jurisdiction as determined by national law and to actively promote, at other jurisdictional levels, the adoption and implementation of effective measures to protect people from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke in all indoor transport and indoor public places and, as appropriate, other public places.

[Guidelines for implementation of Article 8](#) (Guidelines on the protection from exposure to tobacco smoke); At its second session in July 2007, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted guidelines for implementation of Article 8 of the WHO FCTC on protection from exposure to tobacco smoke (decision FCTC/COP2(7)). **The guidelines contain agreed upon statements of principles and definitions of relevant terms, as well as agreed upon recommendations for the steps required to satisfy the obligations of the Convention. In addition, the guidelines identify the measures necessary to achieve effective protection from the hazards of second-hand tobacco smoke. Parties are encouraged to use these guidelines not only to fulfil their legal duties under the Convention, but also to follow best practices in protecting public health.**



2009 Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments: The Recommendation adopted by the Council of the EU in December 2009 calls on Member States to act on three main fronts:

- Adopt and implement laws to fully protect their citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke in enclosed public places, workplaces and public transport as cited in Article 8 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, within three years of the adoption of the Recommendation
- Enhance smoke-free laws with supporting measures such as protecting children, encouraging efforts to give up tobacco use and pictorial warnings on tobacco packages.
- Strengthen cooperation at EU level by setting up a network of national focal points for tobacco control.

About the Smoke Free Partnership:

The Smoke Free Partnership is a strategic, independent and flexible partnership between Cancer Research UK (www.cancerresearchuk.org), the European Heart Network (www.ehnheart.org) and Action on Smoking and Health (UK) (www.ash.org.uk). We aim to promote tobacco control advocacy and policy research at EU and national levels in collaboration with other EU health organisations and EU tobacco control networks. For additional information, evidence and data, please consult the SFP website at www.smokefreepartnership.eu

Media Requests:

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