

World Heart Federation

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**ROADMAP OF ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHO FRAMEWORK
CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL IN THE EUROPEAN REGION 2015-2025**

PROGRESS REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 12

Honourable Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,

The World Heart Federation commends WHO and Member States for the progress made in implementing the *Roadmap of Actions to Strengthen the Implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in the European Region 2015-2025*.

The European region continues to record **one of the highest rates** of tobacco use in the world. Tobacco remains the **single largest preventable risk factor for noncommunicable diseases**, responsible for over **8 million deaths** globally and approximately **1.1 million deaths** regionally every year. It also remains a leading cause of cardiovascular disease, accounting for approximately **15.5% of all cardiovascular deaths** worldwide.

The growing popularity of newer tobacco and nicotine products, such as electronic nicotine delivery systems and heated tobacco products, is particularly concerning. The [*WHO Global Report on Trends in Prevalence of Tobacco Use 2000-2024 and Projections 2025-2030*](#) indicates that at least **86 million adults** and **15 million adolescents** use electronic cigarettes. The tobacco industry's aggressive marketing strategies and misleading claims have largely contributed to the belief that e-cigarettes are harmless. In reality, newer tobacco and nicotine products are far from innocuous. Substantial evidence demonstrates that such products are **associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease**. Nicotine itself is a highly addictive and toxic substance that harms the heart.

The tobacco industry remains the **greatest obstacle** to the implementation of the WHO FCTC. It has

a long-standing history of **systematic and deliberate interference** in health and regulatory policy and science. The industry has sought to create unnecessary and harmful controversy in the minds of the public, healthcare professionals, and policymakers through deceptive claims and industry-funded research to promote its newer products.

The World Heart Federation urges Member States to **fully** implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, in alignment with *WHO MPOWER* measures. In particular:

- Implement **Article 5.3** to safeguard public health from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry;
- Implement **Article 6** to adopt fiscal policies that raise tobacco taxes to at least 75% of the retail price, in line with WHO recommendations;
- Implement **Article 8** to ensure tobacco-free spaces and extend such measures to newer tobacco and nicotine products;
- Implement **Article 14** to scale up evidence-based, lifesaving, tobacco and nicotine cessation services. In particular, **train healthcare professionals**, including cardiologists, to deliver effective interventions; and
- Apply the precautionary principle to **ban or enforce stricter regulations** on newer tobacco and nicotine products, including **prohibiting flavourings and advertising**, to protect future generations from further harm.

We also call on Member States to consider **extending** the *Roadmap of Actions to Strengthen the Implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in the European Region* to 2030 to align with Sustainable Development Goal target 3.a.

The prevention of illicit trade in tobacco products remains a key priority in the region. As such, we call on Member States to **accede** to the **Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products**. We also encourage Member States to engage with the upcoming **Eleventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC**.

To support global efforts, the [WHF Roadmap for Tobacco Control](#), [WHF Policy Brief on E-Cigarettes](#), [WHF Policy Brief on Nicotine](#), and [WHF Policy Brief on Tobacco and COVID-19](#) may serve as practical tools to guide implementation in line with the [WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases](#).

Thank you.

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