

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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TO MARK THE CELEBRATION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL**

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I would like to thank the WHO FCTC Convention Secretariat for inviting me here today and for organising this event to mark ten years since adoption of the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

The FCTC was the world's first legally binding health treaty. As such it was a major political achievement and a demonstration of the collective will to fight the global tobacco epidemic. Since its adoption its influence has been game-changing.

It is thus fair to say that the FCTC has served as inspiration and constant encouragement for all parties to reinforce their tobacco control efforts. In many jurisdictions the FCTC provisions served as model law for national legislation. The EU is an excellent example of this development. As you are aware, last year the EU adopted a new Tobacco Products Directive that has been heavily influenced by developments under the FCTC.

The new provisions will begin to be applied from May 2016. The 28 Member States of the EU are currently in the process of transposing the new provisions into their national legislations.

The influence of the FCTC in preparing the new Tobacco Products Directive was central. Without such a legally binding Treaty, whose provisions had been agreed by the EU and its Member States, it is difficult to imagine the Directive in its current form being passed.

In fact the imprint of the FCTC (and its Guidelines) is to be seen throughout the Directive's text, from the first article, which explicitly mentions the EU's FCTC obligations, to its main provisions, which are spread across several areas and reflect those of the Convention: labelling & packaging; ingredients; illicit trade; cross-border distance sales.

The new rules will introduce **mandatory combined (picture and text) health warnings covering 65% of the top front and back of all cigarette and Roll Your Own tobacco products packaging in the EU**. These health warnings are particularly important for young people that might consider smoking initiation.

The spirit of Art. 11 FCTC, is further reflected through the minimum dimensions of future packages. In particular slim 'lipstick'-style packs will no longer be allowed, which were particularly attractive for young women.

The EU Tobacco Products Directive provisions on **ingredients** are also strongly influenced by the FCTC. Noteworthy are, in particular, the rules on emissions and measurement methods, where it is foreseen that EU rules shall be adapted in line with future agreed FCTC standards.

Significantly, and in line with the spirit of the FCTC Guidelines, the EU Tobacco Products Directive introduces a **prohibition on all tobacco products with a characterising flavour**. To the best of our knowledge the EU is the first jurisdiction in the world that has banned cigarettes and Roll Your Own tobacco with menthol flavours, though an additional transitional period is foreseen for this.

The EU has even made an effort to future proof its legislation. While the Protocol on **Illicit Trade** has not yet entered into force, the EU has already introduced provisions into its new legislation that aim at transposing Art. 8 of the Protocol. Article 8 foresees the introduction of a global tracking and tracing system for tobacco products to facilitate market surveillance and enforcement. The new Tobacco Products Directive foresees the establishment of an EU-wide Tracking & Tracing system, as well as Security Features system, for all tobacco products on its market (at unit pack level).

This ambitious system is set to be implemented by 2019 for cigarettes and Roll Your Own products, and by 2024 for all other tobacco products. Work to define the details of this system is currently underway, as are efforts to oversee the ratification of the Protocol on Illicit Trade as a whole by the EU, and good progress is being made.

Another important element of the new European legislation is that it maintains flexibility for Member States to introduce further requirements in relation to standardised packaging. In this respect it is particularly noteworthy that two EU Member States – Ireland and the UK – have recently announced their intention to introduce plain packaging measures for their respective countries.

Last but not least, the new EU Tobacco Products Directive contains – for the first time – a clear regulatory framework for nicotine-containing e-cigarettes, with clear emphasis on safety, quality and information to consumers – elements which were all strongly reflected in the recent decision on electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) taken at the COP6 in Moscow. The FCTC not only offers guidance for tobacco control policy, but also provides a forum to address new challenges such as electronic cigarettes.

To conclude, I would thus like to underline that the FCTC (and its Guidelines) has been of central importance to the EU. In all of the fields mentioned it has facilitated progress, and contributed to the new EU rules. On an international level it has also been a fruitful and powerful experience for the EU, and the many opportunities for multilateral interactions it has provided, such as the recent COP6 in Moscow, offer an invaluable platform in which to share experiences and learn in a reciprocal manner.

In this light, I would like to thank you once again for the fantastic work carried out over the last ten years. The FCTC has shaped international tobacco policy and we look forward to continued good progress and cooperation.

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