



COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION



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Council agrees its position on revised EU tobacco directive

The Council today agreed¹ a general approach² on a revised draft EU tobacco directive aimed at making tobacco products less attractive by strengthening the rules on how tobacco products can be manufactured, presented and sold.

The deal, which was reached on the basis of a compromise proposal from the Irish presidency, includes the following key elements:

- A **ban** on the use of cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco with **characterising flavours** such as fruit flavours, chocolate or menthol or which contain additives that increase addictiveness and toxicity. This is to make sure that tobacco products taste and smell like tobacco products.
- An obligation for **combined picture and text health warnings** to cover 65 % of the front and the back of packages of tobacco products for smoking.
- A **ban** of any **misleading labelling** (such as "natural" or "organic").
- The **extension of the scope** of the directive to
 - **novel tobacco products** (products that are placed on the market after the entry into force of the directive) which would require a prior notification before being placed on the market;

¹ The agreement was reached at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council.

² A general approach is a political agreement of the Council pending the first-reading position of the European Parliament.

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- **nicotine containing products** (such as electronic cigarettes); these products would be allowed on the market below a certain nicotine threshold provided they feature health warnings; above this threshold such products would only be allowed if authorised as medicinal products (e.g. nicotine replacement therapies);
 - **herbal products for smoking** which would have to carry health warnings.
- Introduction of a **tracking and tracing system**, together with **safety features** in order to strengthen the fight against illicit trade and falsified products;
 - Member states may decide to ban **cross-border distance sales** of tobacco products;
 - Member states may introduce more stringent rules on additives or on packaging of tobacco products (such as **plain-packaging**), subject to certain conditions (such as notification of the Commission).

The general approach agreed today enables the incoming Lithuanian presidency to engage discussions with the European Parliament on this file. The committee for environment, public health and food safety of the European Parliament is expected to vote its draft amendments in July.
