## Factsheet Health Warnings and Plain Packaging

The tobacco package is used for advertising | The package of cigarettes is a very important means to the tobacco industry to create a positive brand image and to make the product as attractive as possible.6

Health warning labels on tobacco products are effective tobacco prevention | Health warnings are a very low-cost intervention because the tobacco industry bears the costs<sup>7</sup>. Large pictorial health warnings prevent young people from taking up smoking, motivate smokers to guit smoking and prevent relapse in former smokers.<sup>3,4,8,11</sup> Providing the number



Pictures: © German Cancer Research Center

of a national quitline on cigarette packages increases calls from smokers looking for help to quit7.

Implementation of health warnings in Europe | By implementing the European directive 2014/40/EU all countries of the European Union achieved the highest level of implementation for health warnings according to WHO MPOWER standards.<sup>11</sup>

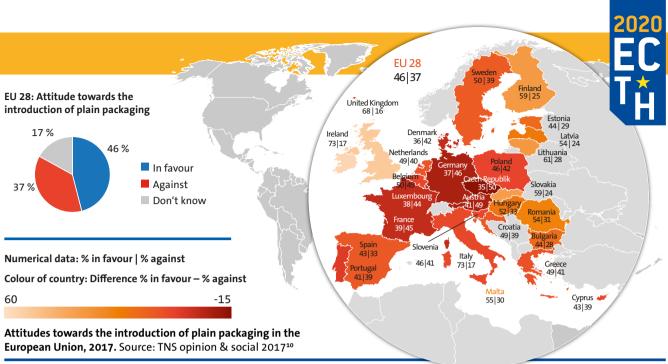
**Plain packaging** | Plain packaging restricts the branding of cigarettes by prohibiting the use of logos, colours and promotional information. It only allows a unique colour for the package and a standard font for the brand name. It deprives the tobacco industry of using the package for advertising and reduces the attractiveness of the package. It makes smokers think about guitting and increases calls to guitlines as well as the effectiveness of the health warnings. The sparse available evidence suggests that plain packaging may reduce smoking prevalence.<sup>5,9,11</sup>

Implementation of plain packaging | In February 2020 in the WHO Europe Region seven countries have implemented legislation on plain packaging, in Belgium legislation will be effective in January 2021 and in Hungary in January 2022. In several more countries plain packaging is under consideration.<sup>1</sup>

Plain packaging is popular | In 23 Member States of the European Union, more people favour than oppose the introduction of plain packaging.<sup>10</sup>



Plain packaging of e-cigarettes, liquid and tobacco heating products, Israel. Pictures: © Shira Kislev



### All EU member states:

- pictorial health warnings
- 65 % of front and back
- appear on individual packages as well as on any outside packaging and labelling used in retail sale
- describe harmful effects of smoking
- rotating sets of 15 different warnings
- mandatory font style, size and colour
- include pictures and pictograms
- written in all languages of the country
- Australia: December 1, 2012 New Zealand: June 6, 2018 Saudi Arabia: May 1, 2019 Thailand: December 8, 2019 Uruguay: December 21, 2019 Turkey: January 5, 2020 Israel: January 8, 2020 Canada: February 7, 2020 Singapore: July 1, 2020

2012

2022

Standardized packaging in Europe and globally and regulations for tobacco packaging in the European Union. Sources: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids 2019<sup>1</sup>, European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2014<sup>2</sup>

Ireland

September 20, 2018

France

January 1, 2017



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