

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002391/25
to the Commission
Roberto Vannacci (P/E)
(13 June 2025)

Subject: Review of the Tobacco Excise Tax Directive — protecting specific production characteristics and Italy's and Europe's economic and cultural heritage

The Commission intends to revise the Tobacco Excise Tax Directive ⁽¹⁾ (Directive 2011/64/EU) to increase minimum rates and extend taxation to alternative products such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.

Commissioner Hoekstra's statements would appear to be paving the way for an increase in tobacco excise duties across the board, with scant regard for the specific production methods, culture-specific features and consumption habits associated with the various categories of tobacco products.

According to press sources, the revision of the directive will lead to exorbitant increases in excise duties in several Member States (+820% in Hungary, +494% in Luxembourg and +43% in Romania) ⁽²⁾.

The proposal appears likely to aggravate disparities at European level, raising serious concerns for the single market and particularly penalising countries whose economies are integrated in the supply chain such as Italy — the EU's leading producer of raw tobacco — which holds a 27% market share as the producer of a total of some 50 000 tonnes/year ⁽³⁾.

This revision would compromise exports of high-quality Italy-made products, such as Tuscan cigars, by introducing a minimum excise duty of EUR 120 per thousand cigars or 40% of the retail price.

Can the Commission therefore say:

1. How it intends to protect Italian and European tobacco producers, safeguarding the competitiveness and economic sustainability of their respective supply chains?
2. What specific steps it will take to ensure that the revision does not compromise the integrity of the single market, avoiding distortions of competition between Member States?

Submitted: 13.6.2025

Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(4 August 2025)

The Commission proposed on 16 July 2025 an update of the EU's Tobacco Taxation Directive. In light of evolving public health challenges and significant shifts in the market, the reform aims at modernising this directive in line with the EU's health and economic priorities, while also ensuring the proper functioning of the internal market.

The Commission is fully aware of the role of raw tobacco, which is entrenched both regionally and within the supply chain for manufactured tobacco.

The Council conclusions of June 2020 requested the Commission to review the Tobacco Taxation Directive and notably the need for a system at EU level to control the movement of raw tobacco to address the risks of diversion to illegal circuit.

Harmonised procedures for the movement of raw tobacco would be important for the Single Market, as well as for operators and enforcement authorities.

With this objective in mind, the impact analysis conducted by the Commission takes a specific look at the impacts on the tobacco supply chain.

The analysis for a revision of the tobacco taxation rules is based on Better Regulation principles, guaranteeing that any revision is based on a comprehensive impact analysis and stakeholder consultations to ensure evidence-based policymaking.

The impact assessment takes careful consideration of public health and fiscal objectives while ensuring a smooth functioning of the internal market.

¹ <https://www.eunews.it/2025/05/16/tobacco-hoekstra-annuncia-una-proposta-di-aumento-delle-tasse-sui-nuovi-prodotti/>.

² <https://www.monetaweb.it/economia-politica/bruxelles-spegne-il-sigaro-toscano-la-tassa-occulta/>.

³ <https://www.masaf.gov.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3426#:~:text=L%27Italia%20%C3%A8%20il%20primo,Umbria%2C%20il%20Veneto%20e%20la.>