

EN

E-003099/2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.9.2025)

1. The statement by the Commissioner for health and animal welfare was made in the context of the proposal for the revision of the Tobacco Taxation Directive (Council Directive 2011/64/EU) published on 16 July 2025¹. The full text of the statement reads: *‘For the first time ever, we acknowledge that new #tobacco and nicotine products pose health risks comparable to traditional ones. With new market developments and the need to protect future generations, rates should be further assessed’*. In this context, ‘new tobacco and nicotine products’ referred to those products that have not yet been specifically regulated under the Directive, such as heated tobacco, e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches.

2. There are no safe levels of tobacco or nicotine consumption, and new products have increasing popularity, especially among young people. The Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks, for example, underlined the negative health effects associated with e-cigarettes². Besides the intrinsic public health risk these products represent, they also have the potential of opening the ways towards conventional smoking. Harmonising tax rules across the EU and introducing minimum rates for such products will allow for better controls, while giving flexibility to Member States to adapt their taxation rules in line with market developments in their country. The increased tax will also help to reduce their attractiveness as tobacco substitutes.

3. It is the official position of the Commission.

¹ https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/taxation/excise-taxes/excise-duties-tobacco/revision-tobacco-taxation-directive-proposal_en.

² https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/scientific_committees/scheer/docs/scheer_o_017.pdf.