

EN

E-001460/2026

Answer given by Mr Hoekstra
on behalf of the European Commission
(9.7.2026)

The proposal to revise the Tobacco Taxation Directive¹ follows the Council conclusions of June 2020², which identified that the minimum rates should provide for further traction, secure long-term revenues, protect public health, and take into account the economic conditions of Member States. The objectives of the proposal cannot be sufficiently achieved by Member States alone and can therefore be better achieved at EU level. By focusing on those areas where cross-border issues are at stake, the proposal does not go beyond what is necessary to achieve those objectives.

In line with the principle of subsidiarity set out in Article 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union³, Member States remain free to set rates for different tobacco products based on their national preferences, provided that they meet the EU minima.

The analysis for the proposal followed Better Regulation principles and was based on comprehensive impact assessments and stakeholder consultations, ensuring evidence-based policymaking⁴. The proposed approach to determining the excise duty rates is partially based on purchasing power parities to ensure that increases in minimum taxes do not disproportionately affect low-tax Member States, while also addressing Member States where nominal tobacco prices are above the EU average but remain low in practice.

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

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44235/st08483-en20.pdf>

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu_2016/art_5/oj/eng.

⁴ See footnote 1.