

Why has the European Commission failed to release the Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments? Health groups call for action

Following the recent finding of maladministration from the Ombudsman's inquiry regarding European Commission meetings with tobacco lobbyists¹, today (31 January, 2024) the Commission has not brought forward the proposed Council Recommendation on smoke free environments.

This is contradictory to the Commission's own planning² to include the smoke free recommendation as part of a cancer 'prevention package' along with vaccine preventable cancers.

Our organisations collectively assert that this is an appalling lack of judgement; failure to recognise that preventing tobacco and novel tobacco products use should be key to Europe's Beating Cancer plan. Without this focus, the targets of the cancer plan will simply not be met.

The unfulfilled commitment to update the 2009 Council Recommendation on smoke-free environments is unacceptable. With new tobacco products now in the European market, an immediate revision focusing on public health is imperative. The absence of action represents a significant misstep in meeting the commitments under the World Health Organization's Framework Convention for Tobacco Control. Notably, it follows delays in the evaluation of the Tobacco Products Directive and the revision of the Tobacco Taxation Directive.

This lapse hinders progress in Europe's Beating Cancer plan, particularly in protecting the youth and future generations from the hazards of second-hand smoke. We urgently call for the proposal's swift release to safeguard public health and meet the Plan's targets.



¹ <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/news-document/en/168641>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2023-003001-ASW_EN.html