

The European Respiratory Society held a stakeholder event on tobacco endgame in the UK on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2023. The discussion brought up several important points of consideration to move forward with the “Stopping the Start” legislation in the UK and steps to be taken by other countries in their progression towards the endgame goal.

There are approximately six million smokers in England, with 64,000 people dying of smoke-related diseases annually. The introduction of the proposed tobacco cessation policy in the UK comes as a crucial measure to reduce the health detriment of smoking.

It is essential to learn from the progress as well as setbacks for a successful adoption and implementation of the policy. The experience of New Zealand partners was showcased at the event. This highlighted their drive in the legislation, which was the elimination of inequalities, creating a smokefree generation, and increasing successful cessation.

While some details of the policy may be up for debate between different stakeholders. It is crucial for government, civil society organizations, and the health community to come together to push forward for the adoption.

The second panel discussion focused on how to envision endgame policies being implemented in other countries. Within the EU member states, there is aspiration for endgame policies as the primary competency lies with Member States. Additionally, domestic sales are not regulated by the Tobacco Products Directive.

“Stopping the Start” is a culmination of considerable efforts by stakeholders in the UK to implement stringent legislation to tackle smoking rates. Many policies have been implemented to fully adhere to the WHO FCTC, which laid down the foundation for an endgame policy to be conceivable.

On the road to endgame, the panel discussion highlighted several recommendations for countries to progress towards it.

1. A package of policies across the EU to ensure tobacco free children. This should include smoking cessation services during pregnancy, smoke-free indoor spaces, reducing affordability and implementing Tobacco 21.
2. Universal provision of tobacco dependency treatment including better data across countries on the healthcare burden of smoking, data on cessation treatment delivery, and ensuring advice to quit smoking is provided regularly.
3. Countering tobacco industry. Having national governments and civil society enforcing Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) would greatly enhance the possibility of implementing more stringent regulations on tobacco control. Countries should monitor and challenge tobacco industry activity, generate data on wholistic economic costs of tobacco and its consequences.

ERS urges national governments to tighten their tobacco regulations and consider gradual implementation of the recommended action against the tobacco industry and in helping people overcome addiction. ERS would gladly support these efforts.