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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Background document - informal lunch - Novel tobacco and nicotine products: impact on children and young people

Delegations will find attached the Presidency background note on 'Novel tobacco and nicotine products: impact on children and young people' to be discussed during the lunch of Health Ministers on 2 December 2025.

Novel tobacco and nicotine products: impact on children and young people

The sale and consumption of novel and emerging tobacco and nicotine products among children and young people is an increasing public health concern across the EU. Given the cross-border nature of the issue, Union-level solutions are needed. However, without a legal framework for cooperation on and regulation of novel nicotine products it is difficult for Member States to respond effectively – particularly when it comes to preventing nicotine uptake amongst children and adolescents.

The Council has repeatedly called for the Commission to act, including in Council Conclusions adopted under the Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies. The Commission recently announced that an evaluation of the legislation on tobacco control will be published in the second quarter of 2026¹.

The working lunch will allow Member States to identify priority areas for this evaluation – specifically, measures to protect children and adolescents from novel and emerging tobacco and nicotine products and consideration of how a revision of the Tobacco Products Directive (2014/40/EU) could enhance Europe's ability to prevent nicotine addiction amongst children and adolescents.

Impact on children and young people

Over the past decade novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products have become increasingly popular among children and adolescents across Member States. There is growing concern about how these highly addictive products are marketed and used, and about their potential role as a gateway to traditional tobacco use. Children and adolescents are more sensitive to the negative side effects of nicotine consumption and are also more prone to addiction than adults².

While the current legislation awaits revision, the marketing of novel tobacco and nicotine products is evolving rapidly and attracting new users, many of them children and young people.

¹ [Commission work programme 2026, Annex II](#)

² [Brug af røgfrie nikotinprodukter blandt unge \(sst.dk\)](#).

Marketing and sales

Several Member States have already implemented national measures to curb rising nicotine addiction among young people, introducing rules to make nicotine products less attractive and less accessible for young people. However, national initiatives are less effective as the sale of tobacco and nicotine is not restricted by borders. These products are readily available online, undermining national efforts to limit children's exposure to nicotine.

Revision of EU tobacco legislation

The Council Conclusions on the Future of the European Health Union: A Europe that cares, prepares and protects, adopted under the Belgian Presidency, called on the Commission to address the marketing of addictive substances to children on social media and to develop a framework that places greater responsibility on social media providers for advertising such substances to children, including those that are illegal in Member States.

These were followed by Council Conclusions on the improvement of cardiovascular health in the European Union, adopted under the Hungarian Presidency, that invited the Commission to evaluate and revise tobacco legislation, notably to address concerns about young people's access to novel tobacco and nicotine products.

In response, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, asked in her mission letter to the Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare for an evaluation and revision of tobacco legislation, with a focus on concerns about young people's access to novel tobacco and nicotine products. The Commission recently announced that the evaluation will be published in 2026.

Questions for discussion

Ministers are invited to reflect on the questions below and, when responding, are kindly requested to limit their interventions to two minutes:

- **Evaluation:** What should the upcoming evaluation of existing legislation prioritise regarding the use and consumption of novel tobacco and nicotine products by children and young people?
- **Directive:** What main challenges should a revised Tobacco Products Directive address to help Member States prevent the use of novel tobacco and nicotine products among children and young people?