

Evaluating the impact of the Tobacco Products Directive within the context of the FCTC in Europe—findings from the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys: introductory Commentary

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Tobacco use is the single most significant cause of preventable morbidity and mortality in the European Union (EU), attributable to 700 000 deaths annually.^{1,2} The largest population-level efforts to reduce tobacco use in the EU include the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)³ and the European Tobacco Products Directive (TPD).² Implementation of the revised TPD, in which EU Member States were required to transpose into National law by May 2016,² offered a unique window of opportunity to evaluate the impact of its provisions. The aim of the Horizon 2020 project entitled, *European Regulatory Science on Tobacco: Policy Implementation to Reduce Lung Disease (EUREST-PLUS)*, was to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the TPD within the context of the WHO FCTC at the EU level.⁴ A primary component of the EUREST-PLUS Project was the creation of an International Tobacco Control (ITC) Policy Evaluation Project 2-wave cohort of ~6000 adult smokers from six EU countries: Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Spain—the ITC 6 European Country (6E) Surveys.⁵ The aim of the 6E cohort surveys was to evaluate the psychosocial and behavioural impact of the implementation of the EU TPD Articles, with an assessment before^{6–20} and after the TPD. The strong methodological approach of the ITC Project further allowed for comparable cross-country analyses with the addition of two other ITC cohort studies involving European countries—England, as part of the ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey, and the ITC Netherlands Survey.^{21,22}

This [Supplementary Material](#) contains 15 articles assessing population-level data on perceptions, behaviours and other impacts after the implementation of the TPD using where possible, cohort-level data. The [Supplementary Material](#) begins with a description of the methodology of the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys.²³ It goes on to provide a landscape of product use in the EU, including transitions between products, before and after TPD implementation,²⁴ such as to and from roll-your-own tobacco.²⁵ In addition, data on quitting behaviours and smoking cessation methods used in the EU are presented,²⁶ and specifically among users of menthol and other flavoured cigarettes.²⁷ A number of articles examine electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes/vaping), including perceptions of harmfulness²⁸ and social norms,²⁹ exposure to e-cigarette advertising, promotion and sponsorship,³⁰ awareness of TPD provisions regarding packaging of e-cigarettes,³¹ and support for e-cigarette policies.³² Awareness and use of heated tobacco products are further examined.³³ Other TPD policies assessed are tobacco warning labels,³⁴

and, for the first time, the additional impact of standardized packaging over enhanced warning labels,³⁵ and awareness of other changes to cigarette packaging design.³⁶ In addition to its focus on EU TPD policies and regulations, the 6E survey also allowed for the evaluation of an FCTC policy that is not also a part of the EU TPD—policies to reduce second-hand smoke.³⁷

This [Supplementary Material](#) thus contains a landmark set of scientific papers, which has created a repository of evidence that can be used not only by the participating countries and the European Commission to inform future policy provisions and evidence-based interventions to reduce the burden of tobacco in Europe but could also be useful to other countries around the world.

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