



## Open Letter to the EU Health Ministers

19 June 2024

Dear EU Health Ministers,

On behalf of the World Vapers Alliance, representing thousands of vapers across Europe, we write to express our profound concern over the proposed ban on flavours in safer nicotine products. **This potential policy threatens to bypass democratic processes and dismiss the voices of 54,000 citizens who have actively opposed the ban through our [petition](#).**

Each year, 700,000 lives are claimed by smoking-related diseases within the EU. The initiative to ban flavours in safer nicotine alternatives is not only misguided but perilous, putting public health at further risk. Policymakers must understand that disregarding the role of flavours in harm-reduction strategies is a critical mistake. It's time for decisions to be rooted in scientific evidence and the genuine needs of the people.

Flavours in vaping products are not just a consumer preference; they are vital for helping adult smokers switch from traditional cigarettes and maintain that transition. Ignoring this fact endangers public health and contradicts the clear preferences expressed by a significant portion of the European population.

The European Commission's delay in publishing the report on the public consultation about the new Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) has created an opportunity for the Danish proposal to sidestep necessary scientific evaluations and public consultations. The 2023 Public Consultation on the Evaluation of the Legislative Framework for Tobacco Control saw unprecedented engagement, primarily from citizens advocating for harm-reduction products. Ignoring this overwhelming feedback undermines democratic principles and public health.

Evidence (see below) indicates that alternative products, supported by the majority of citizens and academic institutions, are effective tools for smoking cessation. The existing regulatory framework for these products is considered adequate by many experts. Moreover, data suggests that alternative products have the potential to significantly reduce smoking rates and cancer prevalence across Europe.

We urge you to vote against the flavour ban proposal and instead support policies informed by robust scientific evidence and public opinion. As the new Tobacco Products Directive is deliberated, it is imperative to acknowledge the importance of alternative nicotine products in reducing smoking rates and enhancing public health outcomes. This is not merely a regulatory issue; it is a matter of saving lives. Prioritizing harm reduction and respecting the voices of the people must be at the forefront of your decision-making.



Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We trust you will make a choice that advances the health and well-being of millions across Europe.

Sincerely,

**Michael Landl**

Director, World Vapers Alliance

### **Scientific Evidence**

A large body of research has established the importance of vaping flavours for adults trying to quit, and there is ample evidence that flavour bans do more harm than good.

- [Friedman & Xu \(2020\)](#), researchers from the Yale School of Public Health, associated the use of vaping flavours with a 230% increase in the odds of adult smoking cessation and concluded that: “Adults who vaped flavoured e-cigarettes were more likely to subsequently quit smoking than those who used unflavored e-cigarettes. (...) Adults who began vaping non-tobacco-flavoured e-cigarettes were more likely to quit smoking than those who vaped tobacco flavours.”
- [Mendelsohn \(2017\)](#), on a submission to an Australian House of Representatives’ Committee, stated that flavours are more likely to keep people off traditional cigarettes, since they help them forget the flavour of tobacco: “Flavours are an important part of the appeal of vaping for adult smokers and make the products attractive as an alternative to smoking, just as flavours are also used to enhance the appeal of nicotine gum. Banning flavours would likely undermine the use of e-cigarettes and public health.”
- [Friedman \(2020\)](#) analyzed the effects of a flavour ban in San Francisco and found that it resulted in rising smoking rates among teenagers for the first time in decades.
- [Rich \(2022\)](#) analyzed the effects of a flavour ban in Massachusetts and concluded that it resulted in higher sales of cigarettes.
- [Gravelly et al. \(2020\)](#) surveyed users of vaping non-tobacco flavours in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States and found that, in the case of a flavour ban, 5 out of 10 would get their flavours from the back market or take up smoking again.
- The [Tholos Foundation \(2022\)](#) analyzed the effects of a flavour ban in Estonia and found that 60% of vapers kept using them by mixing their own liquids or obtaining them from the black market.
- [Friedman et al. \(2023\)](#) studied flavoured ENDS restrictions across the United States and estimated a tradeoff of 15 additional cigarettes for every 1 less vaping pod sold due to flavour restrictions. The authors concluded that “any public health benefits of reducing ENDS use via flavor restrictions may be offset by public health costs from increased cigarette sales.”



As the [EU SCHEER \(2021\)](#) report concluded: “To date, there is no specific data that specific flavourings used in the EU pose health risks for electronic cigarette users following repeated exposure.”