

Tobacco control measures in the Dutch 'National Prevention Agreement' and expected tobacco industry responses

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Background

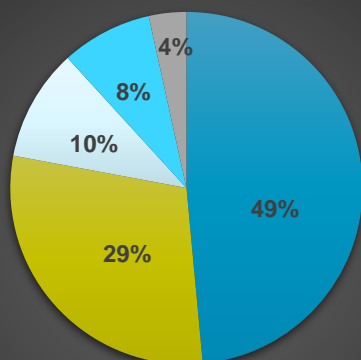
The Dutch government has published a 'National Prevention Agreement' on November 23rd 2018, announcing several tobacco control measures. IVO Research Institute performed a survey among more than 200 tobacco control experts from all over the world to ask their expert opinion about the impact and expected tobacco industry responses on these measures.



204 experts from 29 countries participated in our survey

Participants were from the following countries:

Participants' professions



- Researcher
- Tobacco control advocate
- Medical professional
- Policy maker
- Other

	n	%
Netherlands	53	26.0
Other European countries	78	38.2
Spain	12	5.9
Belgium	9	4.5
United Kingdom	9	4.4
Georgia	7	3.4
Germany	7	3.4
Finland	6	2.9
Norway	6	2.9
France	5	2.5
Lithuania	3	1.5
Austria	2	1.0
Ireland	2	1.0
Romania	2	1.0
Slovenia	2	1.0
Switzerland	2	1.0
Denmark	1	0.5
Italy	1	0.5
Sweden	1	0.5
Ukraine	1	0.5
Outside Europe	73	35.8
USA	53	26.0
Canada	7	3.4
Australia	6	2.9
China	1	0.5
India	1	0.5
Israel	1	0.5
New Zealand	1	0.5
South Africa	1	0.5
Thailand	1	0.5
Uruguay	1	0.5

Participants had on average 14 years of experience in tobacco control

Recruitment

Our short survey was distributed among tobacco control experts from all over the world between November 24th 2018 and January 2nd 2019. We mainly used email to distribute the survey and some email newsletters especially for tobacco control experts. We asked people to forward the email to other tobacco control experts they know. The survey was also distributed through closed Facebook and LinkedIn groups for tobacco control experts. We did not distribute the survey openly on social media or websites to prevent responses from the tobacco industry.

Results

Question: **How much impact can the following tobacco control measures (announced in the Dutch Prevention Agreement) have on smoking prevalence?**

	Experts from the Netherlands (n=53)	Experts from other European countries (n=78)	Experts from outside of Europe (n=73)	
Smokefree addiction treatment centers	3.0 (0.8)	3.1 (1.0)	3.4 (1.0)	*
Ban on using e-cigarettes inside public places	2.9 (1.1)	3.3 (1.4)	3.9 (1.1)	*
Reimbursement of smoking cessation counseling and medications without financial barriers	3.6 (0.9)	3.4 (0.9)	3.4 (1.1)	
Substantial tobacco tax increases	4.6 (0.6)	4.6 (0.8)	4.8 (0.4)	
Tobacco display ban in supermarkets	3.5 (1.0)	3.9 (1.0)	4.1 (0.9)	*
Tobacco display ban in other points of sale (except specialized tobacco shops, where cigarette packs must not be visible from outside)	3.3 (1.0)	3.8 (1.0)	4.1 (0.9)	*
Plain packaging for factory-made cigarettes and rolling tobacco	3.4 (0.9)	3.9 (1.0)	4.1 (1.0)	*
Plain packaging for cigars and e-cigarettes	3.0 (0.9)	3.3 (1.3)	4.0 (1.1)	*
Ban on tobacco advertising on the outside of specialized tobacco shops	3.2 (1.0)	3.8 (1.1)	4.0 (1.0)	*
Ban on cigarette vending machines	3.5 (0.9)	3.8 (1.0)	4.1 (1.0)	*
Ban on smoking rooms in hospitality industry and public buildings	3.4 (0.9)	3.8 (1.1)	4.4 (0.8)	*
Voluntary regulation to remove smoking rooms in other workplaces	2.7 (1.0)	2.7 (1.3)	2.8 (1.4)	
Reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco	3.7 (0.8)	3.5 (0.9)	3.9 (0.9)	*
Smokefree children's environments (schoolyards, petting zoo, playgrounds, day-care, sports clubs)	3.6 (1.0)	3.5 (1.2)	3.9 (1.0)	

Answering categories for this question were: no impact (1), a little (2), somewhat (3), quite a lot (4), very much (5). The table shows means and standard deviations. Measures are marked yellow if they received the highest score from the total group of experts or from the Dutch experts.

* Significant difference between the three groups of countries.

According to the experts, the largest impact on smoking prevalence can be expected from:

Substantial tobacco tax increases

Ban on smoking rooms in the hospitality industry

Reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco

Question: How much effort do you expect from the tobacco industry to counteract (stop, delay, or weaken) these tobacco control measures?

	Experts from the Netherlands (n=53)	Experts from other European countries (n=78)	Experts from outside of Europe (n=73)
Smokefree addiction treatment centers	1.7 (0.8)	1.8 (1.1)	2.1 (1.2)
Ban on using e-cigarettes inside public places	3.3 (1.2)	3.6 (1.2)	3.8 (1.1)
Reimbursement of smoking cessation counseling and medications without financial barriers	1.6 (0.8)	2.0 (1.2)	2.0 (1.2)
Substantial tobacco tax increases	4.6 (0.8)	4.8 (0.5)	4.8 (0.7)
Tobacco display ban in supermarkets	3.7 (0.8)	4.2 (0.7)	4.3 (0.9)
Tobacco display ban in other points of sale (except specialized tobacco shops, where cigarette packs must not be visible from outside)	3.8 (0.8)	4.2 (0.7)	4.3 (0.9)
Plain packaging for factory-made cigarettes and rolling tobacco	4.4 (0.8)	4.8 (0.5)	4.7 (0.8)
Plain packaging for cigars and e-cigarettes	4.1 (0.8)	4.4 (1.0)	4.5 (0.9)
Ban on tobacco advertising on the outside of specialized tobacco shops	3.9 (0.9)	4.1 (0.9)	4.3 (0.9)
Ban on cigarette vending machines	3.8 (0.9)	3.9 (1.0)	3.5 (1.1)
Ban on smoking rooms in hospitality industry and public buildings	3.0 (1.2)	3.6 (1.2)	3.9 (1.1)
Voluntary regulation to remove smoking rooms in other workplaces	2.4 (1.1)	2.4 (1.3)	2.5 (1.3)
Reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco	4.3 (0.7)	4.3 (0.9)	4.3 (0.9)
Smokefree children's environments (schoolyards, petting zoo, playgrounds, day-care, sports clubs)	2.1 (1.1)	2.2 (1.2)	2.3 (1.2)

Answering categories for this question were: no response (1), a little (2), somewhat (3), quite a lot (4), very much (5). The table shows means and standard deviations. Measures are marked yellow if they received the highest score from the total group of experts.

* Significant difference between the three groups of countries.

According to the experts, most counteractions from the tobacco industry are expected for:

Substantial tobacco tax increases

Plain packaging of tobacco products

Experts from the Netherlands generally expect less effort from the tobacco industry to counteract tobacco control measures than experts from the other countries

Question: How successful do you expect the tobacco industry will be when they try to counteract (stop, delay, or weaken) these tobacco control measures?

	Experts from the Netherlands (n=52)	Experts from other European countries (n=78)	Experts from outside of Europe (n=73)
Smokefree addiction treatment centers	1.7 (0.9)	1.7 (0.9)	1.7 (1.0)
Ban on using e-cigarettes inside public places	2.7 (1.0)	2.7 (1.1)	2.8 (1.2)
Reimbursement of smoking cessation counseling and medications without financial barriers	1.5 (0.9)	1.7 (1.0)	1.6 (0.9)
Substantial tobacco tax increases	3.5 (1.0)	3.4 (1.0)	3.5 (1.0)
Tobacco display ban in supermarkets	2.6 (1.0)	3.0 (1.1)	3.2 (1.1)
Tobacco display ban in other points of sale (except specialized tobacco shops, where cigarette packs must not be visible from outside)	2.9 (0.9)	3.2 (1.2)	3.3 (1.1)
Plain packaging for factory-made cigarettes and rolling tobacco	3.0 (1.0)	3.2 (1.2)	3.4 (1.1)
Plain packaging for cigars and e-cigarettes	3.0 (1.0)	3.1 (1.2)	3.5 (1.2)
Ban on tobacco advertising on the outside of specialized tobacco shops	2.8 (1.0)	3.0 (1.1)	3.4 (1.1)
Ban on cigarette vending machines	2.9 (1.0)	2.8 (1.0)	2.6 (1.2)
Ban on smoking rooms in hospitality industry and public buildings	2.3 (1.2)	2.6 (1.2)	2.8 (1.2)
Voluntary regulation to remove smoking rooms in other workplaces	2.3 (1.2)	2.3 (1.8)	2.3 (1.2)
Reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco	3.2 (0.9)	3.1 (1.1)	3.1 (1.1)
Smokefree children's environments (schoolyards, petting zoo, playgrounds, day-care, sports clubs)	1.7 (0.9)	1.8 (1.1)	1.6 (0.9)

Answering categories for this question were: not successful (1), a little (2), somewhat (3), quite a lot (4), very much (5). The table shows means and standard deviations. Measures are marked yellow if they received the highest score from the total group of experts or from the Dutch experts.

* Significant difference between the three groups of countries.

According to the experts, the tobacco industry may be successful in counteracting:

Substantial tobacco tax increases

Plain packaging of tobacco products

Reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco

Expert from the USA (40 years of experience in tobacco control research): "It depends on how well the health groups are organized and how much resources they are willing to commit to winning. All these policies are possible if the health groups fight hard enough for them."

Conclusions

Impact on smoking prevalence

According to the tobacco control experts that participated in our survey, tobacco control measures with the largest impact on smoking prevalence are: (1) substantial tobacco tax increases, (2) a ban on smoking rooms in the hospitality industry and public buildings, and (3) a reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco. There were relatively many country differences for this question. Experts from the Netherlands thought that substantial tobacco tax increases and a reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco had the largest impact on smoking prevalence and were less positive about a ban on smoking rooms in the hospitality industry and public buildings. Most measures received high scores on this question about impact on smoking prevalence, meaning that the experts were positive about the measures in the Dutch National Prevention Agreement. Tobacco control measures that received lower scores were: voluntary regulations to remove smoking rooms in workplaces, smoking bans in addiction treatment centers, and a ban on using e-cigarettes inside public places.

Effort from the tobacco industry

The tobacco control experts expected most effort from the tobacco industry to counteract: (1) substantial tobacco taxes and (2) plain packaging of tobacco products. Experts from the Netherlands generally expected less effort from the tobacco industry to counteract tobacco control measures than experts from the other countries. Measures for which few efforts from the tobacco industry were expected, were: reimbursement of smoking cessation counseling and medications without financial barriers, smoking bans in addiction treatment centers, smokefree children's environments, and voluntary regulations to remove smoking rooms in workplaces.

Success of the tobacco industry

When estimating the success of counteractions of the tobacco industry, the experts expected that the tobacco industry may be successful in counteracting: (1) substantial tobacco taxes, (2) plain packaging of tobacco products, and (3) a reduction in the number of points of sale for tobacco. Most measures received low scores on this question, meaning that the experts did not expect the tobacco industry to be particularly successful in counteracting most of the measures. Tobacco control measures that received very low scores were: reimbursement of smoking cessation counseling and medications without financial barriers, smokefree children's environments, and smoking bans in addiction treatment centers.

Conclusions in short

Most impact on smoking prevalence and counteractions from the tobacco industry can be expected when implementing:

- Substantial tobacco tax increases
- Plain packaging of tobacco products
- Reducing the number of points of sale for tobacco

Two tobacco control measures with low expected counteractions from the tobacco industry and moderate to high expected impact on smoking prevalence are:

- Reimbursement of smoking cessation counseling and medications without financial barriers
- Smokefree children's environments such as schoolyards, playgrounds, and sports clubs



This study was carried out by Dr. Gera Nagelhout and Dr. Barbara van Straaten of IVO Research Institute in the Netherlands. Questions can be directed to Dr. Gera Nagelhout: nagelhout@ivo.nl