

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: Implementation through MPOWER

in the WHO European Region, 2022

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and its guidelines provide the strong legal foundation for countries to implement and manage tobacco control. To make tobacco control a reality, WHO in 2008 introduced the MPOWER measures (1), which support scaling-up of specific provisions of the WHO FCTC at country level (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. MPOWER

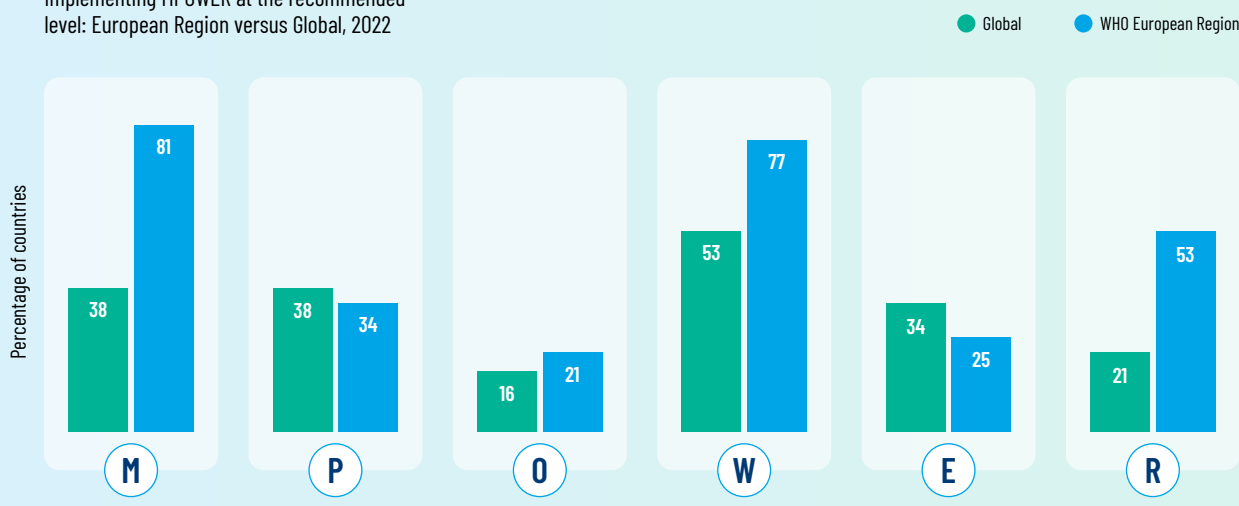


The ninth edition of the WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic (2) was published in July 2023. The report provides comparative data to enable analysis of global, regional and country progress in protecting people from the devastating effects of tobacco use. A set of factsheets, of which this is the first, are based on data from the latest WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, compare overall implementation of MPOWER in the Region with the global picture and for each measure separately.

COMPARISON OF THE PROGRESS IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION WITH THE GLOBAL SITUATION

Fig. 2 shows the proportion of countries that have achieved the highest recommended level of tobacco control for each measure.

Fig. 2. Percentages of countries that are implementing MPOWER at the recommended level: European Region versus Global, 2022

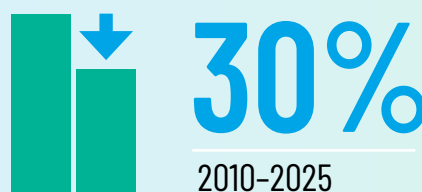


KEY MESSAGES

- Some countries in the Region are considered to be global leaders in tobacco control, and their extraordinary implementation of various articles of the WHO FCTC can be cited as examples of good practice.
- Most countries in the European Region are performing well in the measures **monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies** (81%) and **warning about the dangers of tobacco** (77%).
- The Region is also performing better than globally on **raising taxes** (53% versus 21%). The fact that nearly half of European Region countries levy taxes that are lower than the best-practice level, however, represents a missed opportunity to raise funds for tobacco control and the health sector broadly.
- The measure of **offering support** to quit is at the level of best practice in only 11 countries; another 39 countries offer some level of support.
- The percentage of countries with **comprehensive smoke-free laws** is lower in the European Region than globally (34% and 38%, respectively). As 22 countries have partial laws, more countries should introduce comprehensive smoke-free laws to protect people from the harms of second-hand smoke.
- An increasing number of countries in the Region ban all forms of **advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products**, but the proportion is lower than globally (25% versus 34%).
- Implementation of all MPOWER measures should be improved both in the Region and globally.

The WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013–2020 (3), now extended to 2030, includes the **target of reducing the global prevalence of tobacco use (smoked and smokeless tobacco) by 30% by the year 2025 relative to 2010**. The European Region has regular national surveys covering 99% of its population. These survey data allow measurement and projection of tobacco use trends and show that:

Target for reducing the global prevalence of tobacco use



- 11 countries¹ are likely to achieve at least a 30% relative reduction in tobacco use by 2025 if they continue to implement tobacco-control measures at the current pace;
- 34 countries are likely to achieve a decrease in prevalence, but less than 30%;
- 3 countries² are unlikely to have a significant change in prevalence;
- 1 country³ is likely to have an increase in prevalence;
- for 4 countries,⁴ there are not enough data to calculate a trend; and
- the European Region as a whole has a slow rate of decrease in the prevalence of tobacco use, currently indicating a 17% relative reduction between 2010 and 2025 (4).

Tobacco control is a core element on the Sustainable Development agenda, the health goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly calling for implementation of the WHO FCTC (SDG 3.a) in recognition of the impact of tobacco-related diseases, with more than 8 million deaths each year, on development. As the data show, despite many achievements, progress in adoption and implementation of tobacco control policies and measures remains uneven. Bolder tobacco control measures should be adopted and implemented by Member States to ensure that none is left behind and that countries can meet the time-bound commitments set out in the WHO FCTC and the SDG targets relevant to tobacco control by 2030.

References⁵

- MPOWER. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024 (<https://www.who.int/initiatives/mpower>).
- WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2023: protect people from tobacco smoke. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2023 (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077164>).
- Global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2013 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/94384>).
- WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000–2030. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024 (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240088283>).

1 Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom
 2 Andorra, Croatia, Slovakia
 3 Republic of Moldova
 4 Monaco, North Macedonia, San Marino, Tajikistan
 5 Accessed 10 January 2024