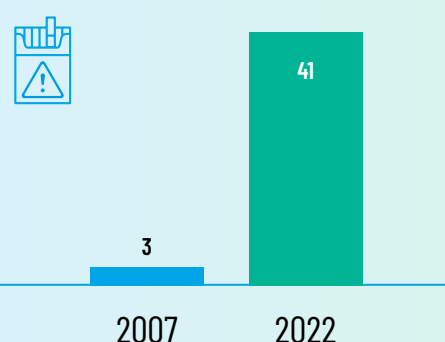


# Warn about the dangers of tobacco

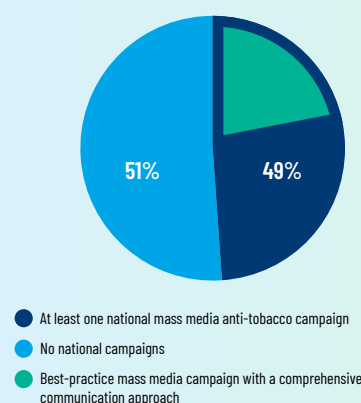
## KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ The number of countries in the WHO European Region that mandate large health warnings on cigarette packages increased from 3 in 2007 to 41 in 2022 (1) (Fig. 1).
- ▶ Thirteen countries in the Region have passed legislation on plain packaging, and some already implement this measure (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands [Kingdom of the], Norway, Slovenia, Türkiye and the United Kingdom).
- ▶ Health warnings are mandated on smokeless tobacco products in 38 countries in the Region.
- ▶ The numbers of countries that mandate pictorial health warnings on packages of cigarettes and of smokeless tobacco products in 2022 were 46 and 4, respectively.
- ▶ The average percentage of the main surface of cigarette packages required to be covered by health warnings varies substantially among countries in the Region, from 30% in Azerbaijan to 93% in Türkiye.
- ▶ Between July 2020 and June 2022, 26 European countries (49%) conducted at least one national mass media anti-tobacco campaign. Of these, however, only 12 had best-practice mass media campaigns with a comprehensive communication approach (Fig.2 ).
- ▶ The guidelines for implementation of Article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control state that “each Party shall adopt and implement effective packaging and labelling measures within a period of three years after entry into force of the Convention for that Party” (1). At present, 9 States Parties to the Convention have not yet implemented this measure at the highest level, and the deadline has now expired.

**Fig. 1.** Numbers of countries in the WHO European Region that mandate large health warnings on cigarette packages, 2007 and 2022



**Fig. 2.** Number of countries in the WHO European Region that conducted national mass media anti-tobacco campaign, 2022



Source: WHO (1).

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

- Mandate health warning labels on tobacco packaging, and conduct impactful mass-media campaigns illustrating the harms of tobacco use.
- Prioritize effective warning labels, including pictorial images, to heighten awareness of the health risks of tobacco use, promote consideration of cessation and decrease tobacco consumption.
- Ensure that anti-tobacco mass-media campaigns have strong themes to ensure a lasting impact.

Table 1 lists selected characteristics of health warnings applied on cigarette packages in countries in the WHO European Region as of 2022.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of health warnings on cigarette packages in countries in the WHO European Region, 2022

Country	Percentage of main surfaces to be covered by health warnings (average –front/back)	Number of health warnings approved by law	Do warnings appear on each package used in retail sales?	Do they describe the harmful effects of tobacco on health?	Are the font, size and colour of warnings specified by law?	Are warnings rotated?	Are warnings written in the principal language of the country?	Does the warning include a photograph or graphic?
Albania	65 – 65/65	45	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Andorra <sup>a</sup>	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Armenia	50 – 50/50	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Austria	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Azerbaijan	30 – 30/30	1	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Belarus	50 – 50/50	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belgium	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina <sup>b</sup>	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bulgaria	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Croatia	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cyprus	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Czechia	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Denmark	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Estonia	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
France	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgia	65 – 65/65	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greece	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hungary	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iceland	35 – 30/40	16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ireland	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Israel	65 – 65/65	13	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Italy	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kazakhstan	65 – 65/65	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	50 – 50/50	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Latvia	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lithuania	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Luxembourg	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malta	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monaco <sup>c</sup>	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Montenegro	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Country	Percentage of main surfaces to be covered by health warnings (average –front/back)	Number of health warnings approved by law	Do warnings appear on each package used in retail sales?	Do they describe the harmful effects of tobacco on health?	Are the font, size and colour of warnings specified by law?	Are warnings rotated?	Are warnings written in the principal language of the country?	Does the warning include a photograph or graphic?
North Macedonia	35 – 30/40	16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	35 – 30/40	16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poland	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Republic of Moldova	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Russian Federation	50 – 50/50	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Marino <sup>d</sup>	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Serbia	35 – 30/40	12	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Slovakia	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovenia	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden	65 – 65/65	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Switzerland	43 – 35/50	16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tajikistan	75 – 75/75	14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Türkiye	93 – 85/100	16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Turkmenistan	65 – 65/65	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ukraine	65 – 65/65	14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	65 – 65/65	14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uzbekistan	40 – 40/40	12	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: WHO (1).

<sup>a</sup> All tobacco products sold in Andorra conform to French or Spanish legislation on health warnings.

<sup>b</sup> The three jurisdictions in the country (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina) adopted separate tobacco-control legislation, with several differences.

<sup>c</sup> All tobacco products sold in Monaco are imported from France and therefore conform to French law on health warnings.

<sup>d</sup> All tobacco products sold in San Marino are imported from Italy and therefore conform to Italian law on health warnings.

## References<sup>1</sup>

1. 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>).
2. Guidelines for implementation of Article 11. Guidelines on packaging and labelling of tobacco products. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2007 (<https://fctc.who.int/publications/m/item/packaging-and-labelling-of-tobacco-products>).

<sup>1</sup> Weblinks accessed 10 January 2024.