

Warn about the dangers of tobacco



World Health Organization

European Region

The tenth edition of the WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic (1), released in June 2025, presents the latest comparative data to assess global, regional and national progress in protecting people from the harms of tobacco use. To support evidence-based policy dialogue in the WHO European Region, a set of measure-specific factsheets has been developed, each summarizing the implementation of one MPOWER¹ component. This factsheet provides an overview of the status of the **W — Warn about the dangers of tobacco** measure as of 2024.

Key messages



The number of countries in the WHO European Region that mandate large health warnings on cigarette packages increased from three in 2007 to 42 in 2024 (1).

2007

3
countries

2024

42
countries

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 sale of smokeless tobacco products is further banned in six countries.

The numbers of countries that mandate pictorial health warnings on packages of cigarettes and of smokeless tobacco products in 2024 were 46 and five, 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 92.5% in Türkiye.

A quitline number is required to appear on all packaging and labelling in 33 countries.

Table 1 lists the selected characteristics of health warnings applied on cigarette packages in countries in the WHO European Region as of 2024.

¹ MPOWER is a set of six cost-effective and high impact measures that help countries reduce the demand for tobacco. The acronym MPOWER stands for: M: monitor tobacco use and prevention policies; P: protect people from tobacco smoke; O: offer help to quit tobacco smoking; W: warn about the dangers of tobacco; E: enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and R: raise taxes on tobacco.

Table 1. Characteristics of health warnings on cigarette packages in countries in the WHO European Region, 2024

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 warnings 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	33	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Andorra^a	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
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^b	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
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 ^c	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^d	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
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
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

Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	Yes								
Norway	Yes								
Poland	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Russian Federation	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	Yes
Spain	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	Yes	Yes
Türkiye	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Turkmenistan	Yes								
United Kingdom	Yes								

Note: "..." means no data available.

Source: WHO (1).

The guidelines for implementation of Article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) 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" (2). At present, eight States Parties to the Convention have not yet implemented this measure at the highest level, and the deadline has now expired.



What should be done?

- ▶ Ensure health warning legislation is clearly articulated and aligned with WHO FCTC Article 11 and its guidelines with the aim to limit misinterpretation.
- ▶ Ensure the inclusion of all categories of tobacco and nicotine products, including smokeless tobacco, new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products and products that are devices used for tobacco use (such as waterpipes, heated tobacco products and e-cigarettes).
- ▶ Monitor the implementation of health warnings and address noncompliance by establishing a monitoring system that allows for measuring compliance to assess violations.
- ▶ Ensure that the rotation of warnings used is being implemented effectively and assess the reach of the warnings to the public.
- ▶ Introduce standardized (plain) packaging to remove all promotional elements from packs (including branding, colours, logos and attractive design features), ensuring that health warnings are the most visible element.
- ▶ Design and fund sustained, evidence-based mass media campaigns that clearly communicate the health harms of tobacco and nicotine use, counter industry misinformation and marketing tactics, and promote available cessation support.
- ▶ Run campaigns with sufficient frequency and duration – not as one-off events – and evaluate their impact to continually improve effectiveness.

References²

1. WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2025: warning about the dangers of tobacco. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2025 (<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/381685>). License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
2. Guidelines for implementation of Article 11. Geneva: WHO FCTC; 2007 (<https://fctc.who.int/publications/m/item/packaging-and-labelling-of-tobacco-products>).

² All references were accessed 14 November 2025.