

Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

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 **E — Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship** measure as of 2024.

Key messages



Thirteen countries in the WHO European Region comprehensively banned all forms of direct and indirect advertising in 2024 (1).

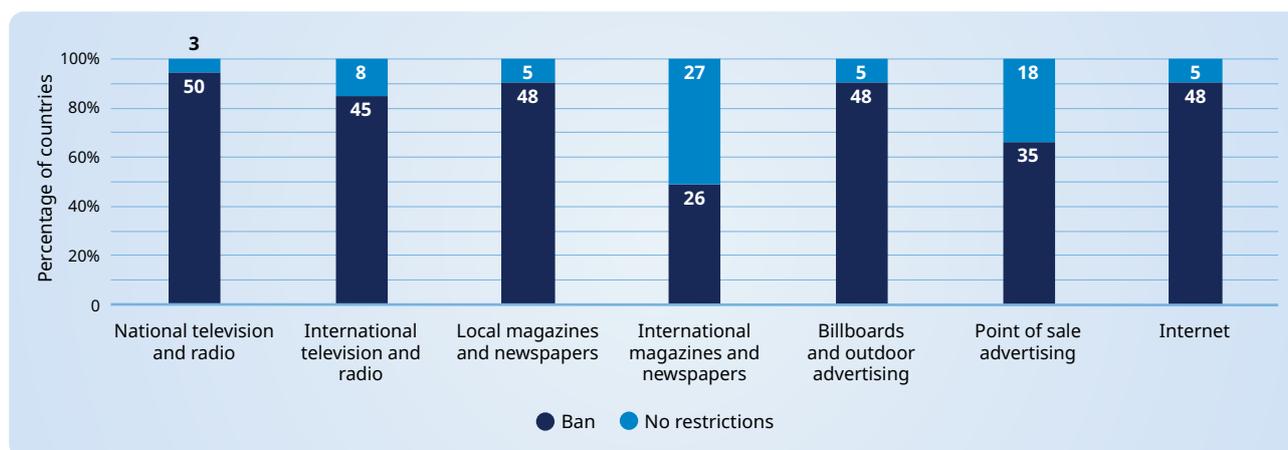
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countries

Most regulated forms of direct and indirect advertising – on national television and radio, in printed media, on billboards and on the Internet, as well as free product distribution and product placement – are banned in most countries in the Region (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

The least regulated forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) include tobacco brand stretching and sharing,² showing tobacco products on television and/or in films and sponsorship (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Number of countries with bans on various forms of direct advertising in the WHO European Region, 2024



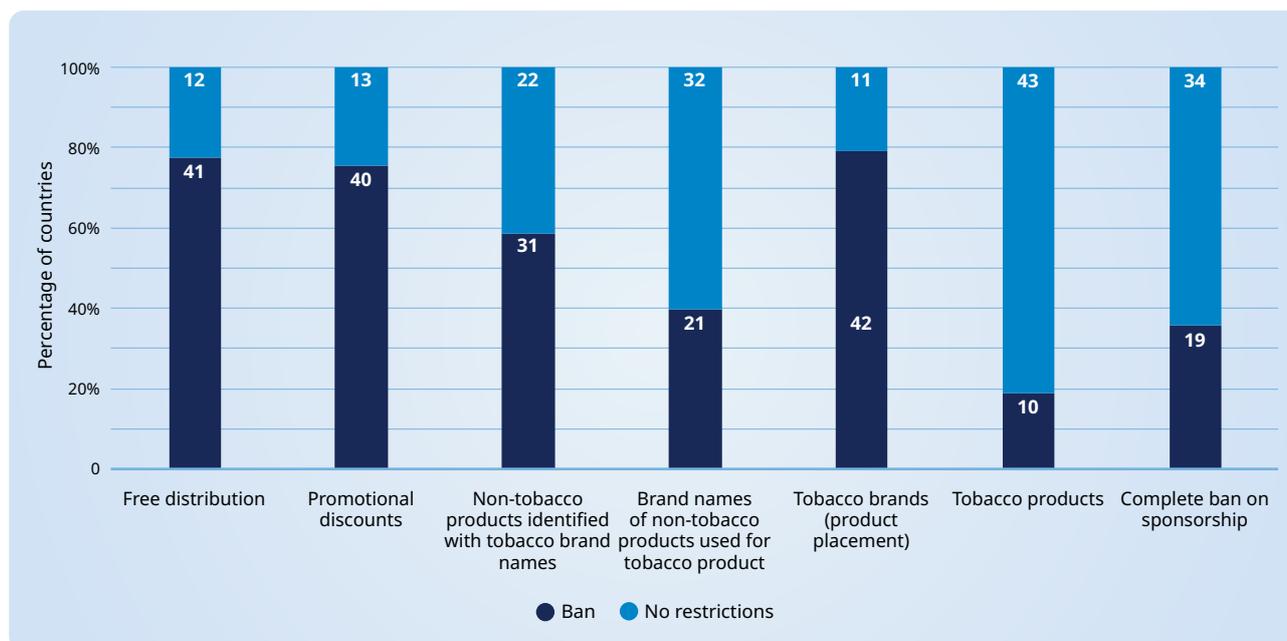
Notes: the number of countries is indicated in the box.

Source: WHO (1).

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.

2 Brand stretching is when traditionally non-tobacco goods are labelled, named or in some way associated with a tobacco brand. Brand sharing is when cigarettes are labelled, named or in some other way associated with non-tobacco goods.

Fig. 2. Number of countries with bans on various forms of indirect advertising in the WHO European Region, 2024



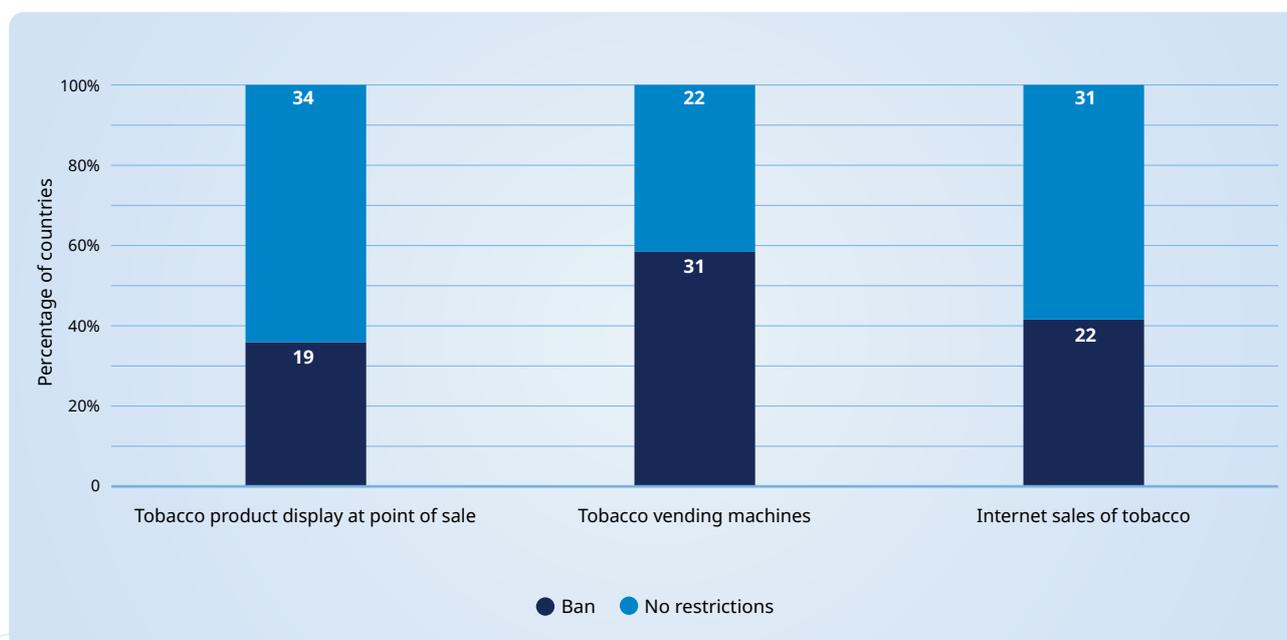
Notes: the number of countries is indicated in the box.

Source: WHO (1).

The increase in advertising bans has made the industry more reliant on point-of-sale displays in retail shops. As of 2024, only 19 countries in the Region (36%) had banned the display of tobacco products at points of sale (Fig. 3).

The sale of tobacco products from vending machines is prohibited in 31 countries (58%) and online sales are banned in 22 countries in the Region (42%).

Fig. 3. Number of countries with bans on tobacco product display at point of sale, on tobacco vending machines and on internet sale of tobacco products in the WHO European Region, 2024



Notes: number of countries is indicated in the box

Source: WHO (1).

According to Article 13 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2), a comprehensive ban must be in effect within 5 years of entry into force of the Convention for each Party, including a ban on cross-border advertising originating from the Party's territory. At present, 37 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?

- ▶ Strive to cover with TAPS bans all forms of advertising, promotion and sponsorship – both direct (e.g. media advertising) and indirect (e.g. brand stretching, product placement, promotional discounts) – as industry marketing rapidly shifts to unregulated channels.
- ▶ Include bans in legislation on domestic and foreign cross-border tobacco advertising, such as on international television and Internet sites and sponsorship of international sporting and cultural events.
- ▶ Ban point-of-sale advertising and in-store displays of tobacco products to reduce smoking by young people and to curb impulse purchases by adults trying to quit.
- ▶ Strengthen the monitoring and enforcement mechanism of tobacco industry advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Impose proportionate and escalating penalties for violations of TAPS provisions.
- ▶ Use new technologies (e.g. digital tools to track advertising online and on social media platforms) to monitor and enforce programmes to ensure comprehensive coverage.
- ▶ Involve civil society in active building, supporting and ensuring compliance with laws on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

References³

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. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control [website]. World Health Organization; 2024 (<https://www.who.int/fctc/en/>).

³ All references were accessed 14 November 2025.