Regulation of e-cigarettes in the WHO European Region as of 2024

World Health Organization

European Region

Introduction

E-cigarettes are the most common form of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENNDS), but other products, such as e-cigars, e-pipes and e-shishas are also available. In these systems, a liquid is heated to create aerosols that are inhaled by the user. So-called e-liquids typically contain various amounts of nicotine, flavours and other additives and chemicals. ENNDS are essentially the same as ENDS, but the e-liquids used are marketed as nicotine-free; in practice, however, some products claimed to be nicotine-free have been found to contain nicotine. E-cigarettes are addictive and harmful to health. Evidence on their adverse effects on population health is mounting, including increased risks for cardiovascular diseases, metabolic dysfunction, lung disorders and other adverse effects *(1)*. Young people in many countries are increasingly taking up the use of e-cigarettes. To prevent this uptake by young people and non-smokers and to counter nicotine addiction, strong regulatory measures should be adopted in a comprehensive approach to tobacco control and should be monitored appropriately.

Key messages

As of 2024, five countries in the WHO European Region had banned ENDS/ENNDS: Kazakhstan, Türkiye and Turkmenistan ban the sale of ENDS/ENNDS, and Kyrgyzstan and Norway[1] ban the sale of ENDS. Three more countries have banned the sale of disposable e-cigarettes (Belgium, France and the United Kingdom). In 2025 Uzbekistan adopted the legislation banning the sale of ENDS.

Most European countries allow the sale of ENDS and ENNDS but have adopted one or more full or partial measures to regulate them. The measures include bans on the use of e-cigarettes in public indoor areas; bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship; application of a graphic health warning on packaging; taxation; bans or restrictions on flavourings; and age restrictions on sale.

Data on the prevalence of ENDS use in the WHO European Region are available from national surveys, including population-based surveys of adults in 43 countries and school surveys of adolescents in 47 countries.

As of 2024, 12 countries prohibited the use of ENDS in public places, while 31 applied partial bans. Almost a fifth of WHO European Member States do not have any regulation for use of ENDS in public spaces (Fig. 1). In total, eight countries do not ban or restrict the advertising and promotion of e-liquids. Twenty-five countries cover e-liquids with the same bans that tobacco products are subject to and 19 countries have specific regulations governing e-liquid advertising and promotion (Fig. 2).

---

1   Only products approved by the Norwegian Directorate of Health are allowed. As of 31 December 2024 none have been approved.

Fig. 1. Number of countries in the WHO European Region with full, partial or no regulation of ENDS use in public indoor areas, 2024

Full
Partial
None
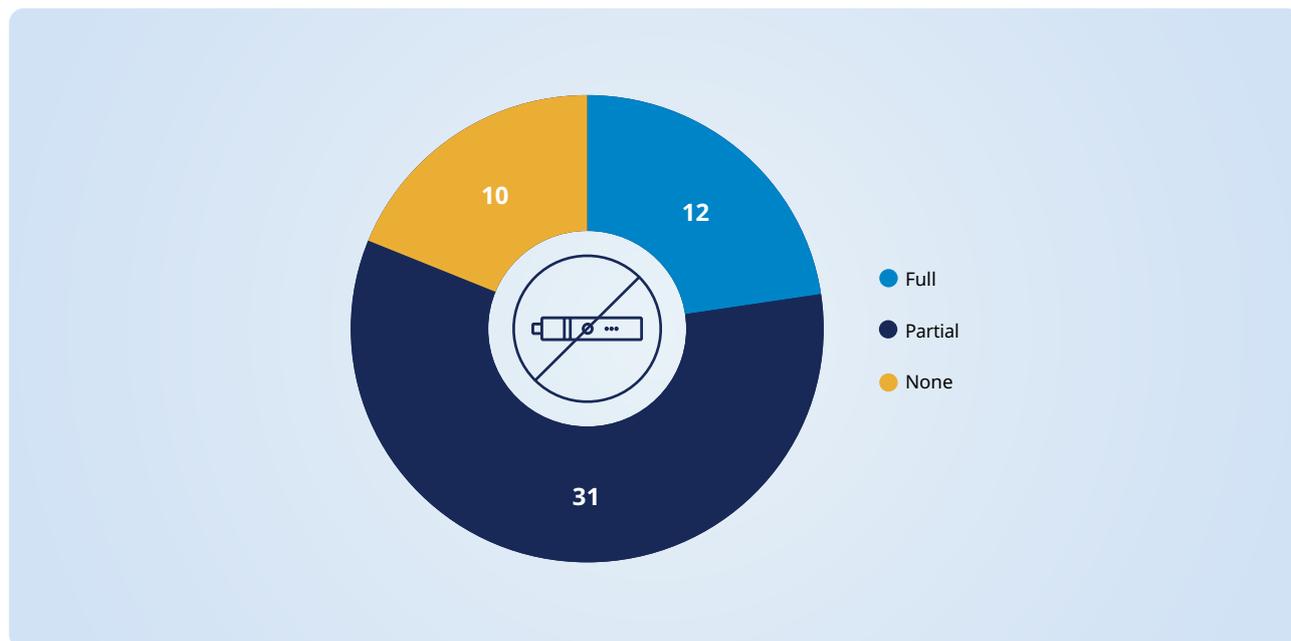
Source: WHO *(2).*

Fig. 2. Regulation of advertising, promotion and sponsorship of e-cigarette devises and e-cigarette liquids in the WHO European Region, 2024


Yes – like tobacco products
None
Partial
Full
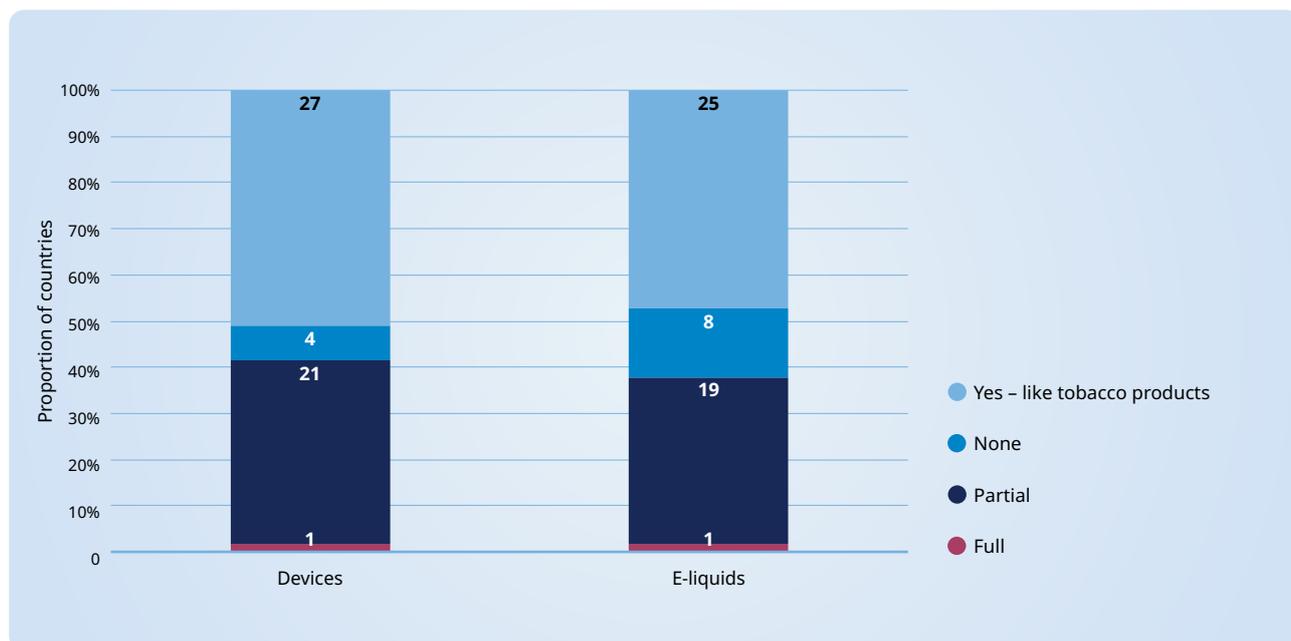
Notes: the number of countries is indicated on the bars.
Source: WHO *(2).*

As with any tobacco or nicotine product, e-cigarette users should be warned about the health risks associated with products they use. Of the WHO European Region countries that allow the sale of e-cigarettes, 12 do not require any health warnings labels on the packages of devises, with eight not requiring such labels on the packages of e-liquids. Pictorial warnings are rare across all product types, with only two countries adopting them. Most countries do not mandate health warnings on non-nicotine e-cigarettes (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Number of countries in the WHO European Region that require health warnings on packages of ENDS and ENNDS devices and liquids, by type, 2024
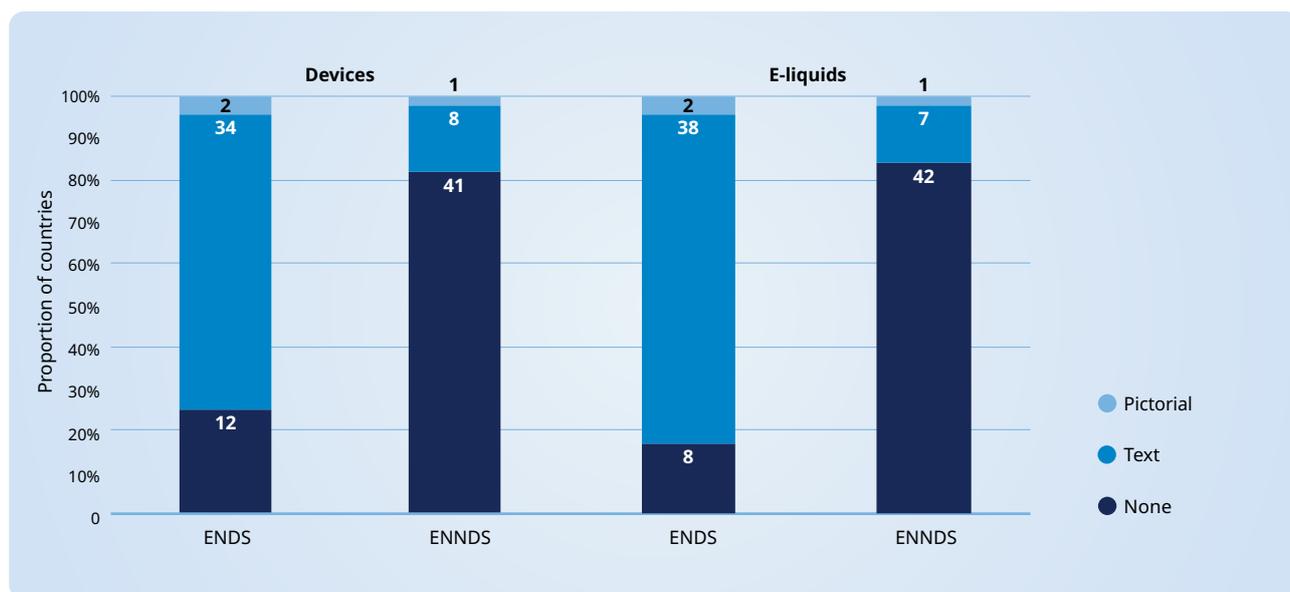
Notes: the number of countries is indicated on the bars.
Source: WHO *(2)*.

E-cigarettes come in various forms, and they can be generally categorized into two broad categories: open systems and closed systems. Open systems are products that have refillable tanks and allow the user to fill their device with the mixtures they want (users can prepare their own e-liquid mixture with or without nicotine, with different nicotine concentrations, variable flavours and other components). Closed systems are products that come with a pre-filled container (called a cartridge, pod or tank). Disposable e-cigarettes are also a part of this category. Closed systems are not meant to be modified and are sold ready to use. Of the countries where data are available, 39 impose a tax on closed system e-liquids (commonly sold as pods); 38 on disposable e-cigarettes; and 40 on open system e-liquids (Fig. 4). In countries that impose the tax on e-liquids, the tax is generally low, with more than half of the countries having a total tax share below 25% of the retail price.

Fig. 4. Numbers of countries that tax e-cigarettes (closed systems, open systems and disposables), 2024
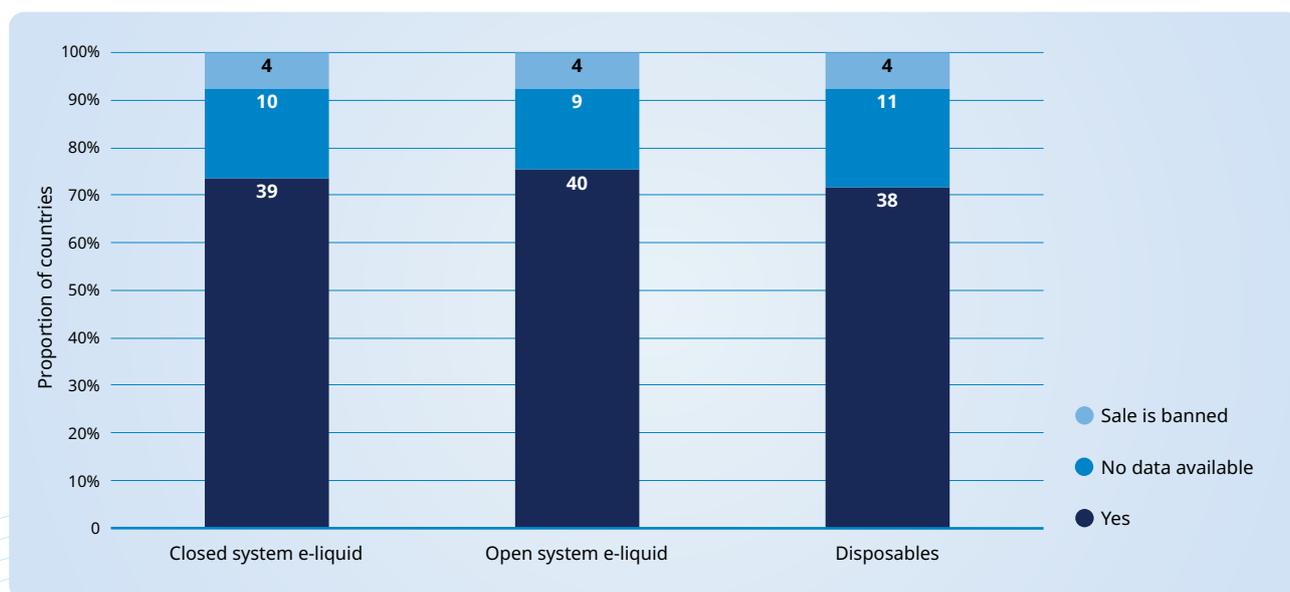
Notes: the number of countries is indicated on the bars.
Source: WHO *(2)*.

Flavours greatly increase the appeal of e-cigarettes to children and adolescents and therefore should be banned. Excluding countries that ban the sale of e-cigarettes, only seven countries have adopted a ban on the characterizing flavours in them (Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and Slovenia). Eight other countries ban only selected flavours or permit specific flavours (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. **Number of countries that apply regulations on use of flavours in ENDS, 2024**
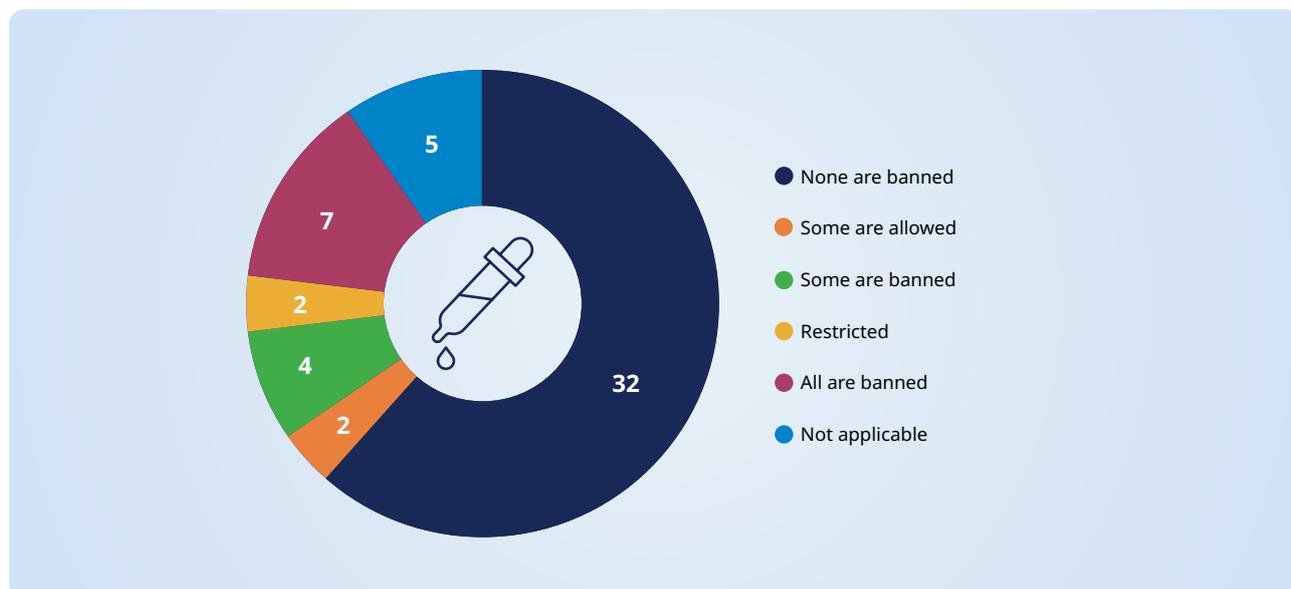
Source: WHO *(2).*

Of the WHO European Region countries that permit the sale of e-cigarettes, 43 countries limit their sale to a minimum age. The limit is 18 years in 41 countries, 20 years in one country (Latvia) and 21 years in another country (Uzbekistan), while the other five countries have no age restriction on e-cigarette purchase (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6. **Number of countries that apply age restrictions on the sale of ENDS, 2024**

Notes: not applicable is when the sale is banned
Source: WHO *(2).*

What should be done?

Countries that ban the sale of e-cigarettes should ensure strong implementation of the ban and continue monitoring and surveillance to support public health interventions. Complementary measures, such as a ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and measures that prevent illicit trade, should be in place and strongly enforced.

Countries that permit the commercialization (e.g. sale, importation, distribution, manufacture) of e-cigarettes as consumer products should ensure strong regulations, including, at a minimum:

▶ regulating e-cigarettes to reduce their appeal and their harm to the population, by, for example, banning all flavouring agents; prohibiting attractive and/or promotional features on the presentation and packaging of products; regulating features that enable the user to manipulate the product; limiting the concentration and quantity of nicotine; setting a maximum volume for e-cigarette cartridges; setting a maximum battery power; prohibiting device features that permit transmission of information to and from third parties (including manufacturers); and prohibiting additives that have carcinogenic, mutagenic or reproductive proprieties;

▶ protecting the public from misleading or deceptive claims, such as on the safety or efficacy of e-cigarettes for quitting cigarette smoking;

▶ prohibiting sale of e-cigarettes to children, controlling the supply chain to reduce the risk that children will gain access and enforcing such restrictions;

▶ applying tobacco control measures to e-cigarettes, including the measures to reduce supply and demand of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control;

▶ strengthening monitoring and surveillance to provide governments with a real-time view of the uptake of e-cigarettes and patterns of use to guide regulatory action;

▶ strengthening enforcement to ensure that the above measures are effective; and

▶ sharing information on the harmful effects of e-cigarette use with the public *(1)*.

References[2]

1. Call to action on electronic cigarettes. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2023 (https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/electronic-cigarettes---call-to-action#:~:text=Overview,health%20harms%20to%20the%20population).
2. 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 References were accessed 14 November 2025.