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NEW REPORT: EXTREME SMOKING, VAPING BANS A THREAT TO AN INCLUSIVE EUROPE

Smokers campaign group publishes a report on the state of smoking and vaping bans in the European Union.

A [report](#) published today (October 16th, 2019) by the smokers' campaign group [Forest EU](#) paints a worrying picture of the rapidly proliferating extreme smoking and vaping bans in Europe.

The new report includes the Smoking in Society Index, the most comprehensive, up-to-date public table of smoking and vaping regulations in the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU), with a ranking showing the worst places to smoke and vape.



Key findings include:

- ***The extent of the new extreme smoking and vaping prohibitions is worrying***

Gold plating by Member State governments, driven by well-funded anti-tobacco lobbies, has overridden the 2009 EU Recommendation on smoke-free environments and introduced smoking bans that go far beyond its core principals. Europe is now dotted with street, park and beach bans, the prohibition of smoking inside one's home or car and the extension of smoking bans to vaping.

- Slovenia is the worst EU country to smoke in, closely followed by Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Ireland and Poland.
- Bulgaria and the Netherlands are the most vaping-friendly states in Europe;
- 12 Member States include both e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn products in their smoking ban legislation.

- ***These extreme bans don't benefit public health and undermine social inclusiveness***

Excessive smoking, vaping bans in the open air don't benefit the health of non-smokers. Far from promoting an inclusive culture, excessive bans are a way to legally discriminate smokers and vapers, banning them from society. The costs of these measures are borne by the hospitality sector, employers, smokers, vapers and taxpayers.

- ***It is however possible to protect non-smokers without marginalising smokers and vapers***

Best practices drawn from nine EU Member States show it is possible and popular to have sensible policies and an inclusive culture by protecting the health of non-smokers and non-vapers without marginalising smokers and vapers.

Guillaume Périgois, Director of Forest EU, said:

“The prohibition of smoking in the open air and the extension of smoking bans to vaping represent a **betrayal** of the 2009 EU Recommendation on smoke-free environments.

“Reaching into smokers’ homes takes tobacco control in a new and rather **sinister** direction.

“These drastic bans are a direct **threat** to the kind of society most Europeans favor.”

He added:

“A significant number of European adults enjoy smoking and vaping and their contribution to society is substantial. The best way for the next European Commission to signal a move away from these extreme bans would be to denounce the **marginalization of the smoking and vaping minority** and reaffirm the principles of the 2009 EU Recommendation.

“The **best practices** from nine EU Member States show it is possible and popular to protect the health of non-smokers without marginalizing smokers and vapers.”

‘Smoking in Society – The pitfalls of extreme smoking bans in Europe and an inclusive way forward’ is published by Forest EU on October 16th, 2019.

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Further comment:



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Note to editors:

- **An electronic version of the report and infographics summarizing the report are available at <http://forestonline.eu/resources/smoking-bans-europe-report>**
- **Smoking and vaping bans in the recent news:**
 - *Smoking ban extended to vaping* – On October 1st, 2019, the Dutch government [notified](#) the European Commission about its plans to extend smoking bans in public places to heated tobacco products and e-cigarettes;
 - *Open air smoking and vaping ban* – On October 11th, 2019, California [announced](#) an outdoor smoking and vaping ban on state parks and beaches.
 - *Smoking ban in the open air* – From July 1st, 2019, Swedes are [not permitted](#) to smoke in outdoor sections of restaurants and bars;
 - *Smoking ban in the open air* – On October 4th, 2019, Australia's Melbourne [imposed](#) a smoking ban in the city's outdoor shopping strip;
 - *Slippery slope* – On October 10th, 2019, citing smoking bans as blueprint, England's former chief medical officer Sally Davies called for a ban on eating, drinking on public transport in her final [report](#) addressing childhood obesity.

- Forest EU is a campaign that informs smokers about the issues that affect them in the European Union and engages with stakeholders so the views of informed adult smokers and non-smokers with an interest in tobacco policy are considered within the EU's decision-making process.
- Forest EU is supported by Tobacco Europe whose members are Japan Tobacco International (JTI), British American Tobacco (BAT) and Imperial Brands PLC (IMB), and by the members of the European Smoking Tobacco Association (ESTA). Its annual budget in 2019 is €165,000.
- Forest EU has an independent organizational structure and advocates for the consumer, not the tobacco industry. Forest EU accepts there are serious health risks associated with smoking tobacco and does not, through its campaigning activities, seek to promote or encourage it.
- For more information, visit <http://forestonline.eu/>