

# WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE

## *Warsaw Declaration for a Tobacco-free Europe, 2002*

**19 February 2002**

Acknowledging that tobacco is a toxic and addictive substance and that the tobacco epidemic is one of the greatest public health challenges facing WHO's European Region, which therefore needs a joint response;

Emphasizing that there is a growing gap in tobacco control between Member States in different parts of the European Region;

Noting that, in spite of successful examples in the Region, a number of Member States are still to establish comprehensive tobacco control policies;

Recognizing that present and future generations deserve smoke-free air and protection from involuntary exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and the negative health, economic and social impacts of tobacco use;

Emphasizing that smoking cessation strongly contributes to a decrease in smoking prevalence;

Building upon the foundations of the first European Conference on Tobacco Policy (Madrid, 1988) and the three consecutive Action Plans for a Tobacco-free Europe spanning the period 1987–2001;

Endorsing the central role of governments in agreeing to, reviewing and strengthening their action plans, drawing together contributions from government, nongovernmental organizations and health professionals;

Highlighting the competence and leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO) within the United Nations system in the field of tobacco control;

Commending the significant value of strengthening regional partnerships and solidarity for efficient action against tobacco consumption;

We, Ministers and Representatives of the States participating in the WHO European Ministerial Conference for a Tobacco-free Europe, are seriously concerned about the continuing threat posed by smoking to global health. We accordingly:

1. commit ourselves to developing and adopting the European Strategy for Tobacco Control (Fourth Action Plan for a Tobacco-free Europe) in accordance with the following guiding principles:

tobacco control is at the top of our public health priorities;

combating the tobacco epidemic is of great importance in protecting the health of individuals, particularly children and young people, who shall be appropriately informed about the addictive and lethal nature of tobacco consumption and the recruiting tactics of the tobacco industry;

comprehensive policies with measurable impact on the reduction of tobacco use shall be effectively implemented throughout the Region. The most important components of such comprehensive policies are: high taxes, bans on tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion, protection against involuntary exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in public places and workplaces, access to cessation measures and strict controls on smuggling;

the new Strategy, building on the results from previous Action Plans, should set clear and specific targets to be achieved in the Region by 2007;

attention must be focused as a priority on the alarming trends in tobacco consumption among young people, women and persons from vulnerable socioeconomic and minority groups;

public health protection has priority over tobacco production, therefore viable alternative economic activities to tobacco production should be promoted, as well as the gradual transfer of subsidies for tobacco growing to other activities;

tobacco policies should include gender-specific concerns and perspectives in all aspects of tobacco control;

2. declare our strong support for preparing a comprehensive WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and urge all Member States in the European Region and the European Commission to:

highlight the priority of public health protection and contribute actively to the development, adoption and ...implementation of a strong and effective FCTC;  
work towards a set of integrated tobacco control measures and agreed international responses against the tobacco epidemic;

3. urge Member States and intergovernmental organizations to strengthen European partnership and solidarity in tobacco control by:

creating a proper intergovernmental mechanism for the regular exchange of information in the technical, scientific and legal fields of tobacco control;  
closing gaps in tobacco control policies between the different parts of Europe by using the experience of successful programmes;  
facilitating assistance in developing national tobacco control policies to countries in special circumstances, such as Member States in economic transition;  
reinforcing the role of national counterparts for the European Strategy for Tobacco Control as an important network for efficient tobacco control policies in the Region;  
making efforts to involve all segments of society in combating tobacco consumption;

4. ask the WHO Regional Director for Europe to:

give high priority to providing guidance and support to Member States in their activities to develop and implement comprehensive tobacco control policies;  
continue to develop the European Strategy for Tobacco Control, for decision by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in 2002;  
assist Member States in the eastern part of the Region, in the light of the particular seriousness of the problem, to obtain support from developmental and donor agencies for developing and implementing tobacco control policies;  
facilitate partnerships between Member States and relevant intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations for coordinated action against the tobacco epidemic in the European Region;  
establish and strengthen systems for standardized surveillance of the patterns, determinants and consequences of tobacco use, and mobilize financial and operational resources to this end, especially for countries in economic transition.

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