

**WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE**

**65<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Vilnius, Lithuania, 14-17 September 2015**

***Agenda item 5 (e) – Roadmap of actions to strengthen implementation of the WHO FCTC in the European Region 2015-2020: making tobacco a thing of the past.***

We fully align with the Luxembourg statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

We wish to thank WHO and the FCTC Secretariat for the very good preparation of the roadmap of actions to strengthen implementation of the WHO FCTC in the European Region, which is in line with the target of 25% reduction of premature mortality due to NCDs by 2025 – set in the Global Action Plan on NCDs 2014-2020.

We share and support the roadmap approach and particularly its focus on children and the youth.

In Italy the FCTC ratification in 2008 has strengthened our commitment to fight tobacco smoke, which remains the major risk factor for NCDs. However, there are still actions that need to be implemented. Our legislation, for instance, allows designated smoking areas, and media campaigns are rather weak and not *evidence-based*. It is also necessary to invest more in research, including emerging challenges linked to new tobacco products *heat not burn*, and their troy horse potential.

A stronger and more coordinated action is needed involving all stakeholders, and a MS' coordinated effort is badly needed.

As indicated in the roadmap, in Italy, surveillance in this area is consolidated through several monitoring systems and an annual report is generated and made available to the general public as well as to all stakeholders. It comes with an estimate of fiscal incomes vs medical expenses related to tobacco.

In 2005 we have been among the first European countries introducing rules and regulations on smoking in indoor public and private places – including workplaces and the hospitality sector.

This law impacted positively. In fact we saw:

- an 18% reduction in prevalence of smokers (from 23.8% in 2003 to 19.5% in 2014);
- a yearly 5% reduction in hospital admission rates due to myocardial infarction and
- a 25% reduction of tobacco products' sale.

The sale of cigarettes to less than 18 years old has been forbidden since 2012 and in 2013 tobacco smoke has been prohibited around schools.

Tobacco control is one of the areas of the Government programme *Gaining health: make the healthy choice the easiest one*, which impacts on major risk factors (smoking, harmful use of alcohol and lack of physical activity) through a model Health in All policies approach .

The National Prevention Plan 2014-2018 aims at reducing by 10% the prevalence of smokers by 2018 through life course intersectoral health promotion interventions.

May I also remind all Colleagues that the incoming new immunotherapies for cancer, and in particular lung cancers, will impact very positively on patients' survival but at a cost that will undermine the health system financial sustainability. This is also making a stronger emphasis on prevention imperative.

In conclusion, in order to improve and consolidate results obtained by the FCTC, we firmly believe in the crucial role of coordinated cooperation in the European Region and we confirm our commitment in this regard,

Thank you Chair.