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## **OPINION POLL: NO APPETITE FOR STRICTER ANTI-TOBACCO RULES SAY EU VOTERS**

### **Smokers campaign group publishes pan-European survey on views of European citizens on EU measures to tackle smoking.**

An opinion poll published today (13 November 2018) by the smokers' campaign group Forest EU reveals that there's no overwhelming public support for more tobacco control measures in the EU.

The opinion poll conducted by Populus for Forest EU found:

- ***No overwhelming public support for more tobacco control measures***  
Overall respondents are more likely to agree (56%) that measures to tackle smoking have gone far enough;
- ***Reducing tobacco use should not be a DG SANTE priority***  
Out of a list of 10 key health objectives, Europeans think curbing tobacco consumption is the second least important issue for the European Commission's DG SANTE to focus on (#9 out of 10 options), far below tackling breast cancer (#1), food information, waste and fraud (#2) and rare diseases (#3);
- ***Plain packaging is not the solution to reduce youth smoking***  
Just 3% of EU citizens think the introduction of plain packaging for tobacco products is the most effective solution to reduce youth smoking rates, way below mandatory education in schools about the health risks of smoking (52%), harsher penalties for shopkeepers caught selling tobacco to children (23%) and a ban on adults buying cigarettes for children (9%).

Guillaume Périgois, Director of Forest EU, said:

“Lobby groups hostile to tobacco consumption are campaigning for the EU institutions and national governments to introduce new rules they believe are fundamental to eradicating smoking. What this poll shows however is that there is relatively little public support for further extreme anti-smoking measures.”

“What is similarly clear is that EU voters support a common-sense approach to tobacco control. Regulation should not be made at the behest of taxpayer-funded lobby groups but based on trustworthy, independent evidence.”

He added:

“A significant number of European adults smoke, and enjoy doing it, and their contribution to society is substantial. The best way for the next European Commission to signal a move away from an excessively bureaucratic approach would be to prioritize actions in the areas that EU citizens clearly see a need.”

“The results of this survey show that Forest EU's positions are representative of those held by smokers in Europe. Like Forest EU, 73% of European smokers think tobacco control measures have gone far enough, 47% think curbing tobacco use should be DG SANTE's *bottom* priority and 80% think bars, cafés and restaurants should have the legal option to provide a separate, well-ventilated smoking room.”

*'Populus – Attitudes towards tobacco policies in the EU' is published by Forest EU on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018.*

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**Further comment:**

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**Note to editors:**

- Populus interviewed 6,167 adults aged 18+ online in France (1,024), Germany (1,036), Poland (1,040), Romania (1,029), Italy (1,018) and Spain (1,020), with interviews being conducted between 25th and 31st May 2018. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For more details go to [www.populus.co.uk](http://www.populus.co.uk).
- An electronic version of the report and an infographic are available here: <http://forestonline.eu/resources/eu-attitudes-towards-tobacco-policies-2018>
- This selection of member states covers 60% of the EU population with 310 million citizens and a diversity in smokers' habits, tobacco control policies and historical factors.
- 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 the Confederation of European Community Cigarette Manufacturers (CECCM) 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). Our annual budget in 2018 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/>