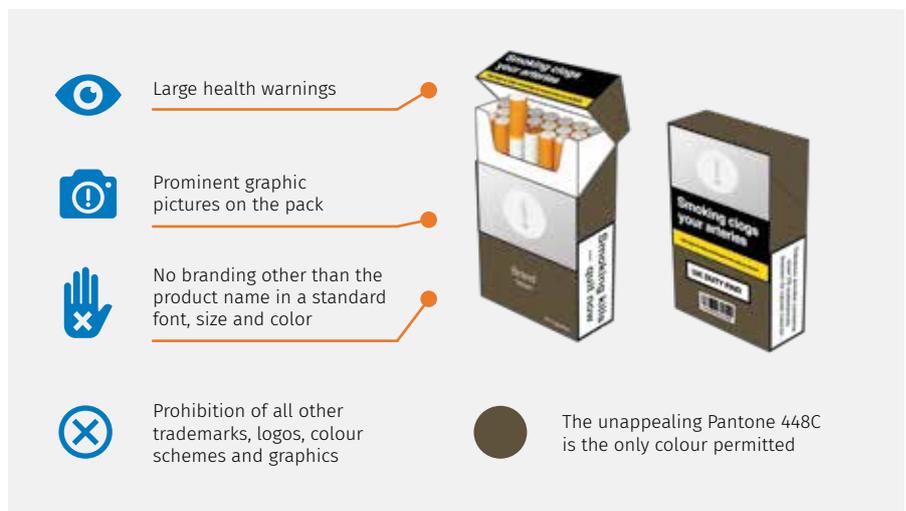


Plain Packaging Briefing Note

Plain packaging is an extreme approach to tobacco regulation that has begun to be introduced in a handful of countries. Even though it **negatively impacts consumers** and **doesn't improve health**, plain packaging is still being lobbied for by tobacco-control groups and is **now being considered for other products**.

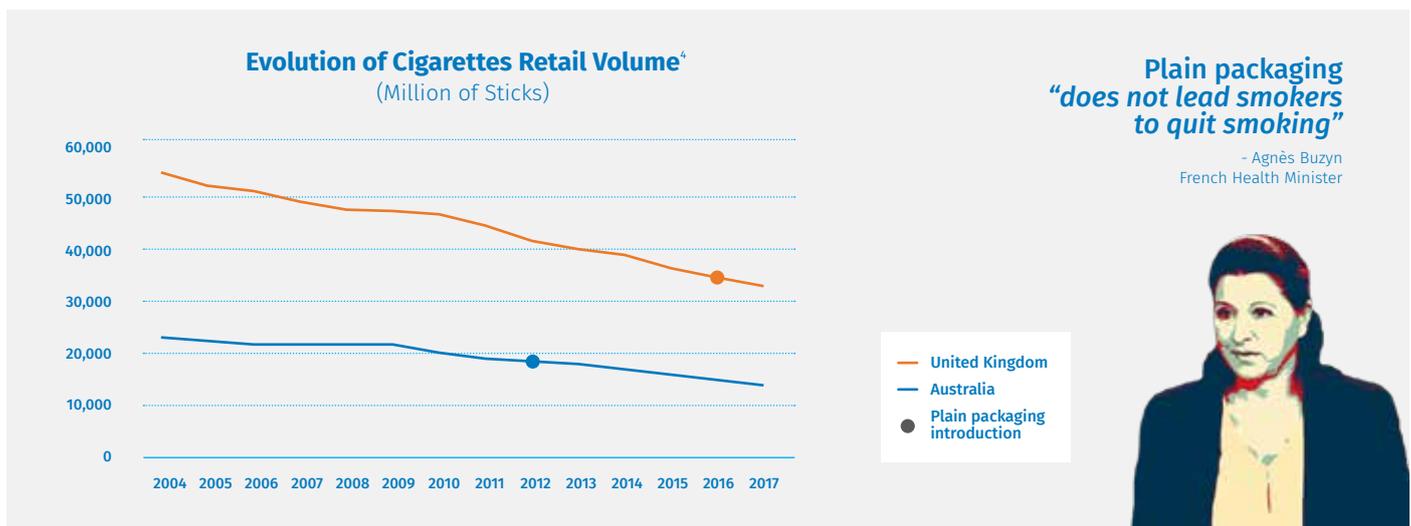
What is plain packaging?

Plain or standardised packaging means **all cigarette packs look the same** and are **mandated to be bad-looking**. The breach in trademarks sets a negative precedent for the protection of intellectual property rights and impinges on the consumers' ability to make informed choices. Plain packaging policies remain limited around the world. Only fourteen countries have so far fully implemented plain packaging, including Australia (2012), France and the United Kingdom (2017).



Plain packaging doesn't work

No reliable evidence was put forward to support plain packaging and experience demonstrates **it does not change smoking rates**. Australia was the first country in the world to impose it with the intention to curb smoking prevalence and data published by the government showed no change in decline in smoking rate.¹ Similarly, data from the UK showed this measure had no statistically significant impact on smoking prevalence.² Following its deployment in France, carried out alongside increases in excise duties, the French Health Minister declared that plain packaging “does not lead smokers to quit smoking”.³



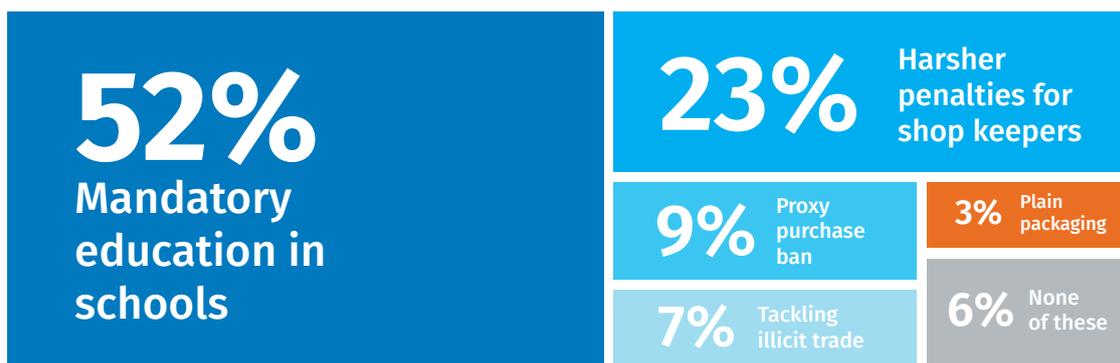
Plain packaging fails consumers

While plain packaging **doesn't give smokers additional information** about the product they purchase, it also **reduces consumer choice** by making it almost impossible to differentiate products⁵. Promoted by tobacco-control groups to increase shameful "avoidant behaviours"⁶ and achieve the "denormalization of smoking behaviour",⁷ plain packaging represents a way for governments to **legally ostracise users** from society. But smokers might soon not be the only consumers impacted: this policy is starting to bleed into other sectors and proposals have been made by government officials to introduce **plain packaging for alcohol⁸, sweets, crisps and carbonated drinks⁹**.



Plain packaging doesn't solve youth smoking

Governments claim that plain packaging is designed to make smoking less attractive to younger smokers. But the Australian experience shows there was no statistically significant reduction in youth smoking in the first year after its introduction.¹⁰ Moreover, just 3% of EU citizens think plain packaging is the most effective solution to reduce youth smoking rates, way below mandatory education in schools about the health risks of smoking (52%).¹¹ Governments' focus should shift from plain packaging that predominantly impacts adults to **targeted education programmes** needed in schools to make sure children are aware of the risks of smoking from a young age.



1 From: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illegal-use-of-drugs/ndshs-2016-key-findings/contents/highlightsfrom-the-2016-survey>, see "Highlights from the 2016 survey".
 2 From: http://www.europe-economics.com/publications/tpd2_and_standardised_tobacco_packaging_dec_2018_1.pdf
 3 From: <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cr/2017-2018/20180075.asp>
 4 From: Euromonitor International, Tobacco, 2019 edition.
 5 In Australia, low priced cigarettes have doubled their market share between 2011 and 2016 (from 29% to 60%) at the expense of medium and high priced cigarettes (from 19% to 10%) as people are switching to cheaper cigarettes, from: <https://home.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/uk/pdf/2017/04/Australia-illicit-tobacco-Report-2016.pdf>, see page 11. The impact on consumer choice could be significant because some brands will almost certainly disappear from the market.
 6 From: https://www.who.int/ctc/mediacentre/news/2015/ProfKarineGallopel-Morvan_PlainPackagingEffectiveness_27Feb2015.pdf
 7 From: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28425907>
 8 From: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733108/alcohol_public_health_burden_evidence_review_update_2018.pdf
 9 From: <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-48499195>, <https://www.ippr.org/files/2019-06/public-health-and-prevention-june19.pdf>
 10 From: <http://www.tobaccopreventioncessation.com/Re-analysing-tobacco-industry-funded-research-on-the-effect-of-plain-packaging-on-78508,0,2.html>
 11 From: <http://forestonline.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Forest-EU-%E2%80%93-Infographic-%E2%80%93-Attitudes-towards-tobacco-policies-in-the-EU.pdf>



For more information:

contact@forestonline.eu
 forestonline.eu
 +32 2 895 36 12

Forest EU
 Square de Meeüs 35
 1000 Brussels, Belgium