A DECADE OF SMOKING CESATION IN EUROPE

The continent with the worst smoking habit is gradually giving it up. A range of anti-smoking policies and new cessation products has led to reduced rates of smoking in most countries, which will eventually impact on smoking-related deaths.

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SMOKING DEATHS

Deaths from smoking-related illness are the leading cause of death and disability worldwide. The graph below shows the proportion of tobacco-related deaths for most of the countries shown (2014).

SMOKING RATES IN EUROPE

Daily smoking rates among adults in Europe (2012) are higher for men than for women in most countries; 28% of all deaths were attributed to smoking. In the past decade, most countries have experienced a decline in daily smoking rates; the rate of smoking in Norway, for example, has almost halved. Smoking is linked to over 200 diseases, with varying degrees of success, although it may take more time for governments to reduce smoking-related deaths to be fully realized.

DELAYED HEALTH BENEFITS OF QUITTING TOBACCO

Quitting smoking has both immediate and long-term health benefits. After just a few weeks, carbon monoxide levels fall and the risk of heart disease begins to decline. Quitting is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing challenge, and those who quit are encouraged to use nicotine replacement therapy or other tools to stay away from tobacco. Quitting smoking reduces the risk of cancer by 50% in the first year, and the risk of heart disease is reduced to that of a nonsmoker.

DECLINING RATES OF SMOKING AND DEATHS FROM SMOKING-RELATED ILLNESSES

In the past decade, smoking in adults in Europe has declined in both men and women. In the UK, 15% of men smoked in 2014, down from 35% in 1978. Smoking rates in the rest of Europe but rates within the EU with the exception of Switzerland, Greece, and Ireland have remained relatively high. The World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is adopted by the World Health Organization in 2003. It provides an internationally co-ordinated response to combating the tobacco epidemic, and sets out specific steps for governments to take to reduce smoking, advertising, smoke-free environments, health warnings and illicit trade.

Tobacco REGULATION IN Europe

Since the first studies showed a link between smoking and cancer in the 1950s, there have been a number of regulations introduced to try to reduce tobacco consumption as well as several products licensed for smoking cessation.