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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

25 JUNE – 1 JULY 2022

EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROPOSES BAN ON FLAVOURED HEATED TOBACCO PRODUCTS AS A PART OF THE EUROPEAN BEATING CANCER PLAN

On Wednesday (29 June), the European Commission presented its proposal prohibiting the sale of some heated tobacco products, such as vaping items. Thus, the proposal will not affect many e-cigarettes, as some of them only contain nicotine.

The proposal is in line with the Commission's goal of cutting tobacco use to less than 5% of the EU's population by 2040. It is also a part of "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan," since tobacco is the largest single avoidable health risk in the EU, contributing to 27% of all cancers attributed to its use. Even so, a recent study revealed by the Commission showed a 10% increase in sales of heated tobacco products in more than five member states for the period 2018-2020, while heated tobacco products exceeded 2.5 % of total sales of tobacco products overall across the bloc.

The Council and the European Parliament will debate the ban's proposal before it enters into force, after its publication in the Official Journal. Subsequently, 27 Member States will have eight months to transpose the directive into national law and three more months before the provisions will come into effect.

Source: https://health.ec.europa.eu/latest-updates/europes-beating-cancer-plan-commission-proposes-prohibit-flavoured-heated-tobacco-products-2022-06-29_en

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EEA) REPORT: POLLUTION CONTRIBUTES TO 10% OF CANCER CASES IN EUROPE

According to the report revealed on Tuesday (28 June), exposure to air pollution, ultraviolet radiation, asbestos, radioactive radon, some chemicals, and other pollutants causes over 10% of the cancer burden in Europe. The document provides an overview of the environmental determinants of cancer and assesses relevant EU policy responses.

However, the report also explains that the environmental and occupational risks are preventable - provided that the EU takes urgent action in terms of cutting pollution, implementing the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability, as well as other existing EU policies.

The fundamental European Zero Pollution Action Plan is set to be achieved by 2050 – it concerns air, water, and soil pollution. The three main goals include: improving air quality to reduce the number of premature deaths caused by air pollution, improving water quality by minimizing waste, plastic litter at sea, and microplastics released into the environment, as well as improving the soil by decreasing nutrient losses and chemical pesticide use by 50 percent.

It is worth mentioning that the EU has already taken some legislative measures on air pollution, carrying out the National Emissions reduction Commitments (NEC) Directive and the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive setting air quality standards for Europe.

Source (full report): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental-burden-of-cancer>

EU DELIVERS THE FIRST BATCH OF MONKEYPOX VACCINES TO THE AFFECTED COUNTRIES

The first package of 5,300 vaccine doses against monkeypox purchased by the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) was delivered to Spain on Tuesday (28 June), an EU Commission spokesperson has informed.

A few weeks ago, the Commission obtained 1,09,090 doses of a smallpox vaccine Imvanex, produced by Danish manufacturer Bavarian Nordic, and proposed to immediately start deliveries to the 27 EU member states, as well as to Norway and Iceland. It is worth mentioning that currently Imvanex is authorised in the EU for the prevention of smallpox, but due to the similarity between the two viruses, the vaccine for smallpox could be also used to contain the surge of monkeypox.

In the meantime, since Imvanex is not broadly available in Europe, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) recommended the use of its counterpart produced in the U.S. called Jynneos, approved by the FDA. Simultaneously, EMA started a review of the use of Imvanex in treating monkeypox. According to the agency, laboratory studies indicate that the vaccine "triggers the production of antibodies that target the monkeypox virus".

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_4146

Thank you for your attention!

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