



## Dear Honourable Member of the European Parliament

**As global advocates of tobacco harm reduction, we wish to draw your attention to how Swedes have just made smoking history.**

Latest figures from Sweden's public health agency reveal that only 4.5% of Swedish-born adults over the age of 16 now smoke, placing them significantly below the globally recognised benchmark of 5% for smoke-free status. Even when including all residents, the smoking rate has dropped to 5.3%, barely one-fifth of the European average of 24%.

Sweden's extraordinary success in virtually eradicating smoking highlights the transformative potential of harm reduction policies. Sweden has pioneered a pragmatic approach, weighing up the risks and benefits and focusing on less harmful alternatives to smoking, rather than outright prohibition. Key to this success has been:

**ACCESSIBILITY** - A wide range of smoke-free nicotine alternatives such as oral nicotine pouches, vapes and snus, available in various strengths and flavours, ensures consumers have viable substitutes to smoking.

**ACCEPTABILITY** - Informing the public about harm reduction has empowered consumers to make healthier choices. Pragmatic regulation, including responsible promotion of smoke-free nicotine alternative products, has raised awareness and facilitated switching from deadly cigarettes.

**AFFORDABILITY** - Through proportional taxation, Sweden applies an excise tax that makes smoke-free products more affordable than cigarettes, encouraging a switch to less harmful smoke-free options.

Notably, the data reveals that individuals born elsewhere in Europe would have been on average three times more likely to smoke if they had not moved to Sweden. This underscores the effectiveness of Sweden's policies in reshaping health outcomes even for populations with traditionally higher smoking rates.

The EU's own official data confirms that its current tobacco control strategies are falling woefully short of achieving a smoke-free society by 2040. The Special Eurobarometer 539 shows that the EU-wide smoking prevalence has seen only a one percentage point

decrease since 2020. Despite efforts such as taxation, public smoking bans and awareness campaigns, smoking rates across the EU remain high, with only modest declines.

At the current rate, the EU may not reach its 5% target until 2100, highlighting the need for more effective and modernised strategies.

As the EU revisits the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD), it is crucial therefore to learn from Sweden's success. Evidence-based policies that strengthen smoking cessation or facilitate switching to smoke-free nicotine alternatives, can significantly accelerate the transition to a smoke-free Europe while safeguarding public health.

We urge you to consider the evidence to integrate harm reduction methods into tobacco control, as called for in the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Article 1(d). Sweden has demonstrated proof of concept, which could be replicated in harm reduction-focused reforms within the TPD, including:

- **Supporting the availability of smoke-free nicotine alternatives in appropriate strengths and flavours.**
- **Accurate risk communication to Europeans who smoke, to inform them about less harmful smoke-free options.**
- **Establishing risk-proportionate taxation policies, to incentivise a shift away from deadly cigarettes.**

Sweden's achievement demonstrates that a balanced and pragmatic approach to tobacco control can yield remarkable public health outcomes. The EU has an opportunity to lead globally by adopting similar evidence-based strategies.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue. We hope Sweden's experience serves as an inspiration for policy reforms that benefit all Europeans.

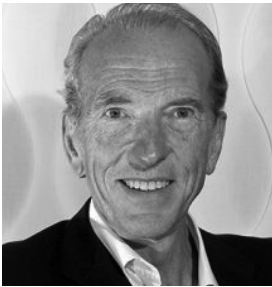
*Yours sincerely,*

*Dr. Delon Human, Prof. Karl Fagerström,  
Prof. Heino Stöver, Dr. Jacques le Houezec and Prof.  
Andrzej Sobczak*



**DR. DELON HUMAN - FRANCE**

Dr. Delon Human is a specialist family physician, global health advocate, published author, international speaker and healthcare consultant specialising in global health strategy, harm reduction and health communication. He is the former Secretary-General of the World Medical Association, International Food and Beverage Alliance and Co-founder of the African Harm Reduction Alliance (AHRA). He has acted as an adviser to three WHO Directors-General and to the UN Secretary-General on global public health strategies.



**PROF. KARL FAGERSTRÖM - SWEDEN**

Prof. Karl Fagerström is a psychologist and founding member of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT). He was awarded the World Health Organization medal in 1999 for his outstanding work in tobacco control. In 2013 he was the recipient of the Award on Clinical Science from the Society for Research on Tobacco and Nicotine. He has been part of the early development of the nicotine replacement products and developed the first non-tobacco nicotine pouch.



**PROF. HEINO STÖVER - GERMANY**

Prof. Stöver is a social scientist and Professor of Social Scientific Addiction Research at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences in Germany, Faculty of Health and Social Work. Since 2009 he has been the director of the Institute of Addiction Research. Heino Stöver's main fields of research and project development expertise are health promotion for vulnerable and marginalised groups, drug services, prison health care and related health issues (especially HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, drug dependence, and gender issues), and the potential of e-cigarettes. His international research and consultancy expertise includes working as a consultant for the European Commission, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Health Organization (WHO), European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Open Society Institute (OSI) in various contexts.



**DR. JACQUES LE HOUZEC - FRANCE**

Trained as a neuroscientist in Paris, has been working on nicotine and smoking cessation for more than 30 years. He is a Consultant in Public Health & Tobacco dependence, based in Rennes, France. He is also Director of [www.treatobacco.net](http://www.treatobacco.net) (a website dedicated to the treatment of tobacco dependence, available in 11 languages), Honorary Clinical Associate Professor, at the UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies, University of Nottingham, England, and member of the Addiction research group at INSERM 1178 (Mental and Public Health), in Paris, France.



**PROF. ANDRZEJ SOBCZAK - POLAND**

Prof. Andrzej Sobczak is a full professor at the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice. A chemist by education, with extensive experience in biochemistry and toxicology. He was the head of the Department of General and Inorganic Chemistry at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences of the Medical University of Silesia. He also headed the Department of Chemical Hazards and Genetic Toxicology at the Institute of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health in Sosnowiec. In the years 2018-2022 he was a member of the Council of the National Science Center. Awarded twice by the Minister of Health for scientific and teaching achievements. Author of several dozen works in the field of Tobacco Control.