



# Spotlight on FCTC Article 20



Co-funded by  
the Health Programme  
of the European Union



## Recommendations to implement FCTC Article 20

*EU action is needed on FCTC Article 20 to improve research, surveillance, collaboration, and information exchange on tobacco. This will help to improve the development of evidence-based policy, reduce inequalities in research and tobacco control across Europe and assist the EU to fulfil its obligations under international treaties and agreements.*

The presentations show that so far, not enough has been done to implement FCTC Article 20. There are considerable shortcomings with regard to existing tobacco research across the EU and striking gaps in terms of research, surveillance and exchange of information. The current situation regarding the distribution of research across the EU and across research topics, and the lack of coordination and knowledge exchange is disconcerting. In resource-constrained settings, research funding first and foremost needs to contribute to interventions that have the most population impact and are most effective in reaching high-risk groups. It also has to be conducted in settings that have the highest prevalence and are most in need of interventions. The current research situation in Europe does not sufficiently reflect evidence-based priorities or address these needs.

One of the major problems is that research within the EU is often conducted in isolation, efforts are not well coordinated, capacity building is insufficient, knowledge is not exchanged to the degree that is necessary and beneficial, and few efforts are made to establish equal partnerships with researchers outside the EU. Various barriers to collaboration and information exchange exist. These include a tendency to work in silos and within disciplinary boundaries, a lack of funding for collaboration, the absence of incentives for researchers to conduct applied research, and a discomfort among academics to engage with policymakers, advocates and practitioners. Such barriers have to be overcome in order to make the most of existing research, develop effective research in the future, close research gaps, and improve evidence-based policymaking that contributes to the adoption and implementation of effective tobacco control policies.

We recommend the EU to implement FCTC Article 20 and improve research, surveillance and knowledge exchange on tobacco between European member states and non-European countries. The following actions can constitute first steps into this direction.





## **1. Call on DG Research & Innovation to create a budget line within the Horizon 2020 for tobacco control & applied research based on FCTC Art 20.**

We call on the EU to establish an infrastructure for research on tobacco and a budget line for tobacco control research based on FCTC Art 20. The UK model of partnership building offers a blueprint for a European Centre of Excellence on Tobacco Control that promotes collaboration. Such an infrastructure will provide a contact point for policymakers, civil society organisations, the health sector, the media and citizens to get evidence-based information on tobacco. An international, Europe-wide Centre of Excellence will facilitate cross-border collaboration as well as locally relevant research. In order to adopt effective, evidence-based and locally tailored interventions, research needs to be bespoke to the local context. In order for policy research to impact policy, research needs to be conducted in the locality where the policy is being made. Comprehensive information which provides an EU-wide overview of research funders, research consortia and existing research is needed to improve research on tobacco. A Europe-wide Centre would also help fill the gap of tobacco research in some parts of the EU and help to provide research on all aspects of tobacco control. The European Commission, notably DG Research & Innovation, are requested to enforce Article 20 by exploring ways to set up a Centre of Excellence which coordinates and information exchange and feeds into member states' policies on tobacco control by providing guidelines and promoting best practice.

## **2. Call on DG Research & Innovation to establish a committee on Tobacco and applied research within Horizon 2020**

DG Research & Innovation is requested to establish a committee within Horizon 2020 which is composed of members of different backgrounds (academics, policymakers from the EC, members of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board and the EP, civil society representatives) and has designated power to decide on the tobacco specific budget line. The committee needs to identify research that is needed, and prioritize, commission and coordinate relevant research. A designated FCTC Article 20 tobacco research committee, i.e. a science-led expert group based on the provisions of the Horizon 2020 Specific Programme would provide an adequate infrastructure to foster and coordinate tobacco control research across the EU. An authoritative one-stop shop for EU research on tobacco control is urgently needed to streamline research funding. Implementing FCTC Article 20 can help the European Commission to improve tobacco control while fulfilling their obligations in terms of the careful use of European finances and improving the health of European citizens<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/Tobacco/Documents/tobacco\\_exs\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/Tobacco/Documents/tobacco_exs_en.pdf) See Executive Summary - I. Organisational and structural recommendations: Investment and regulatory capacity & I.I. The need for greater research capacity