

Sixteen European countries jointly highlight the hazards of cigarette additives

On 13 September, sixteen European countries will launch websites informing the public about additives used by the tobacco industry to make cigarettes more attractive. These substances are harmful to health. After all, the more cigarettes they smoke, the more smokers are exposed to toxic substances. This project is the brainchild of the RIVM and the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ). The aim is to provide European citizens with objective information about additives, such as how they work and their impact on health.

The sites in each of these sixteen European countries provide details of fourteen specific additives that tobacco companies add to cigarettes. These substances include glycerine, sugars, cellulose, liquorice, cocoa, menthol and vanilla. The additives are intentionally mixed with tobacco to make these cigarettes more attractive. These added substances make cigarettes more attractive to smokers who have only recently taken up the habit. They also encourage people to smoke more. As a result, these additives have a substantial impact on public health. This is because smoking is a major factor in the development of lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory diseases. In Europe, nearly 700,000 people die each year from the effects of smoking.

Vanilla, one of the most commonly used additives in cigarettes, is also one of the most popular flavours in the world. This is no coincidence. Tobacco manufacturers deliberately add vanilla flavouring to tobacco, cigarette paper, or filters. Burning vanilla is known to release a range of different chemicals, including substances, which have been classified as carcinogenic by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Vanilla also inflicts damage indirectly, because by masking the sharp taste of cigarette smoke it makes smoking more attractive. Most people do not realize that vanilla and dozens of other substances are added to cigarettes to improve their taste.

The countries involved in this partnership:

The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Estonia, Malta, Austria, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Norway, France, Finland, Turkey and Switzerland.

The English originals of the fact sheets are on the web sites of the two key partners,

RIVM (ammonium compounds, sugars, sorbitol, propylene glycol, glycerol, cocoa, furfural and acetaldehyde): www.tabainfo.nl

DKFZ (menthol, carob bean, cellulose fibre, prune juice, vanillin, guar and licorice): <http://www.dkfz.de/de/tabakkontrolle>



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