

August 10 - 14, 2026

Tobacco Industry Overview

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This Week at a Glance

Romania: Latest Developments

International Developments

This Week at a Glance

- **Romania Intensifies Anti-Smuggling Enforcement** - Romania is strengthening controls against tax evasion and smuggling, with increased monitoring of purchases and excise compliance.
- **Europe Tightens Tobacco and #PPWR Packaging Rules** - The EU is advancing stricter rules on cigarette emission testing and recycled plastic packaging, while the UK is tightening vaping and nicotine product restrictions.
- **Europe Strengthens Tobacco Control Cooperation** - ECTC 2026 will bring European policymakers and tobacco-control experts together in Istanbul to discuss emerging regulatory challenges.
- **WHO FCTC Appoints New Secretariat Head** - Andrew Black was appointed for a four-year term, with a mandate to strengthen global implementation of the FCTC and its Protocol.

Romania: Latest Developments

(1) Romania Strengthens Measures Against Tax Evasion and Smuggling

Finance Minister Alexandru Nazare has called for clearer rules and stronger monitoring tools to combat tax evasion and smuggling, highlighting new measures under ANAF/AVR Order No. 1613/956/2026. The minister also stressed that enforcement should protect compliant taxpayers and businesses that pay their taxes and excise duties, as well as safeguard state budget revenues.

Impact: The measures could lead to increased scrutiny of tobacco movements and purchases declared for personal use, particularly where authorities suspect undeclared commercial activity or illicit trade. Tobacco operators should expect continued enforcement efforts and ensure robust controls over distribution, documentation and excise compliance.

International Developments

Europe

(1) CJEU Requires Free Public Access to ISO Standards for Tobacco Emission Testing

The **Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)** has ruled that ISO standards used to measure **tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide emissions from cigarettes must be freely accessible through a general, effective, free and non-discriminatory system**. The Court clarified that, although these standards do not need to be published in the EU Official Journal to be enforceable, individuals who have had access to their official and authentic versions cannot challenge their use or request alternative measurement methods.

Impact: The ruling provides greater legal certainty for the tobacco industry on the enforceability of ISO-based emission testing requirements under the Tobacco Products Directive, while confirming that referenced technical standards must be freely and equally accessible. Manufacturers should monitor implementation and ensure continued compliance with the applicable ISO testing methods.

(2) #PPWR: EC Consults on Harmonized Rules for Recycled Plastic Content

The **European Commission** has launched a public consultation, open from **14 August to 16 September 2026**, to prepare harmonized rules under the **Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR – EU Regulation 2025/40)** for calculating and verifying recycled content in plastic packaging. The initiative aims to establish common requirements for calculation methods, technical documentation, data flows, traceability and, where necessary, independent third-party audits.

Impact: For the tobacco industry, the rules could affect plastic packaging components by introducing additional requirements for data collection, traceability, verification and potentially certification or auditing of recycled content. Companies may need to adapt IT and supply-chain systems and incur additional compliance costs, although harmonised EU rules should reduce differences between Member States.

(3) #PPWR: EC Consults on Certification of Recycled Plastic Imported from Third Countries

The **European Commission** has launched another public consultation, open from **14 August to 16 September 2026**, to prepare rules under the **Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR – EU Regulation 2025/40)** for the **assessment, verification and certification of recycled plastic originating from non-EU countries**. The initiative aims to establish common rules for assessing

equivalence with EU-recycled materials, verifying environmental and health standards, and using independent third-party audits where necessary.

Impact: The rules could increase compliance requirements and costs for companies importing recycled plastic used in packaging, including data collection, traceability, documentation, certification and audits. Harmonised EU requirements should, however, reduce regulatory differences between Member States and create a more level playing field for recycled plastic sourced from the EU and third countries.

(4) ECTC 2026 to Focus on Strengthening International Tobacco Control Cooperation

Preparations are underway for the **11th European Conference on Tobacco Control (ECTC 2026)**, which will take place in **Istanbul, Türkiye, from 4–6 November 2026**, under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye and hosted by the Türkiye Green Crescent Society and International Green Crescent Federation in partnership with ENSP. The conference will bring together policymakers, researchers, public health experts and tobacco-control advocates to exchange knowledge and discuss emerging challenges and coordinated approaches to tobacco control.

Impact: The event could contribute to the development and coordination of future tobacco-control policies across Europe, particularly regarding emerging nicotine products and regulatory approaches. Tobacco companies should monitor the conference agenda and outcomes for potential policy recommendations that could influence future regulation at EU and national level.

(5) French MP Proposes €15 Tax per 1,000 Cigarettes to Fund Reforestation

French MP Yannick Neuder has proposed introducing a €15 tax per 1,000 cigarettes sold, to be paid by tobacco manufacturers, with the proceeds intended to finance wildfire prevention, reforestation and support for civil protection services. The proposal is currently at the draft stage and would require approval by the French Parliament before entering into force.

Impact: If adopted, the measure would increase the tax burden on tobacco manufacturers in France and could raise production and compliance costs. It may also set a precedent for using tobacco taxation to finance environmental and public protection initiatives, potentially increasing pressure for similar levies in other markets.

(6) UK Tightens Age and Promotional Rules for Vaping and Nicotine Products

The **UK Government has published guidance on new rules taking effect from 29 October 2026**, extending the minimum age of sale of **18 to all vaping and consumer nicotine products**, including vapes, e-liquids, nicotine pouches and synthetic nicotine products, across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The rules will also prohibit proxy purchasing, free promotional distribution and substantial

promotional discounts, with enforcement including fixed penalties of **£200 in England, Wales and Scotland** and potentially £250 in Northern Ireland.

Impact: The measures will increase compliance requirements for tobacco and nicotine companies and retailers, particularly around age verification, promotional activities and sales practices. The restrictions could limit marketing opportunities and affect sales of nicotine pouches and vaping products, while increasing the risk of penalties for non-compliance.

United States

(1) FDA Authorizes Reduced-Risk Claims for 20 ZYN Nicotine Pouches

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** has authorized **Swedish Match USA** to market **20 ZYN nicotine pouch products with a specific modified-risk claim**, allowing the products in 3 mg and 6 mg strengths to be promoted as presenting lower risks of serious diseases than cigarettes, including lung cancer, heart disease and stroke. The authorization follows an extensive scientific review and applies specifically to the 20 approved products; the orders are valid for five years and require post-market surveillance of consumer behaviour and understanding of the risk information.

Impact: The decision is significant for the tobacco industry as it strengthens the regulatory recognition of nicotine pouches as a potentially lower-risk alternative to cigarettes and may support category growth and consumer switching in the U.S. It could also encourage other manufacturers to pursue modified-risk authorizations.

WHO FCTC

(1) Andrew Black Appointed New Head of WHO FCTC Convention Secretariat

Andrew Black has been appointed Head of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) Convention Secretariat for a four-year term. A tobacco-control policymaker with extensive experience, Black has worked at the Secretariat since 2016, including leading implementation support to Parties through the FCTC 2030 project, and previously headed the UK Department of Health and Social Care's tobacco control programme. He has pledged to strengthen support for governments in implementing the WHO FCTC and its Protocol, with a focus on ending the global tobacco epidemic and protecting young people from nicotine addiction.

Impact: The appointment signals continued strong international efforts to strengthen implementation of the WHO FCTC and its Protocol. The tobacco industry should expect sustained advocacy for stricter tobacco-control measures globally, including policies aimed at reducing tobacco consumption and youth uptake, as well as closer international cooperation and implementation support.