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Tobacco Industry Progress Report

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National News

International News

National News

Romania's Cigarette Black Market Hits Six-Year High

Romania's cigarette black market rose to 12.6% of total consumption in November 2025, up from 9.6% in September and marking the highest level in six years, according to Novel Research. The annual average for 2025 reached 10.6%, driven largely by western regions and Bucharest-Ilfov. **Bulgaria remains the main source of illicit cigarettes**, with Moldova's share also increasing. Authorities intensified enforcement, seizing millions of packs and large quantities of loose tobacco, dismantling criminal groups, and imposing fines, while legal tobacco companies continue contributing over RON 22 billion annually in taxes.

International News

Europe

EU Advisory on Harmful Products

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) issued an own-initiative opinion **stressing the need to regulate industries that negatively impact public health, including tobacco**, alcohol, and ultra-processed foods. It calls for **stricter marketing rules, targeted taxation of harmful products, supply chain transparency, and a “Health-Responsible Enterprise” label**, while highlighting the economic and social costs of tobacco in Europe (700,000 deaths and €98 - 130 billion annually). The EESC also supports expanding ECDC’s mandate to monitor commercial determinants of health and **urges integrating these priorities into the 2028 - 2034 EU budget framework**, presenting a strategic opportunity for businesses to reduce regulatory and reputational risks while driving innovation.

Ukraine Cracks Down on Tobacco

Ukraine’s State Tax Service has stepped up enforcement in the tobacco retail sector, **imposing \$5.1 million in penalties, revoking over 1,600 licenses, and dismantling 90 illegal trading points** in cooperation with the police. While these measures boosted the formal market (tobacco retail revenue rose 25.6% to \$700 million and excise tax receipts jumped 26.9%), the **illicit market also grew to 17.8% of sales**, driven mainly by counterfeits, causing a \$610 million revenue shortfall.

USA

FDA Seeks Feedback on Smokeless Tobacco Warnings

The U.S. FDA has submitted a **proposed information collection to the OMB on health warning “rotational plans” for smokeless tobacco**, requiring the four federally mandated warnings to rotate quarterly on packaging and ads. Plans must be reviewed and approved by the FDA and can be submitted electronically or on paper. The agency estimates an annual reporting burden of 120 hours and invites public comments by 15 February 2026, with the notice scheduled for publication in the Federal Register on 16 January 2026.