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Tobacco Industry Progress Report

Raport pregatit de Ana-Maria Anghel



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Petition Calls to Ban Vaping Indoors.

An online petition launched by Declic and Dr. Mihail Pautov is calling for a law change to ban all types of vaping devices, with or without tobacco, in indoor public spaces, gathering nearly 40,000 signatures. The initiative highlights a legal gap: current regulations only restrict traditional cigarettes, leaving e-cigarettes unregulated, even though they are widely used in restaurants, bars, cafes, and malls. The devices release fine and ultrafine particles, including nicotine, heavy metals, and carcinogens, which can harm the lungs, blood, brain, and other organs. The petition urges the Ministry of Health to act to protect public health, especially children, pregnant women, and vulnerable populations.

Romania Bids to Host EU Customs Authority.

On January 28, **Romania officially submitted its bid to host the European Union Customs Authority (EUCA)** during an extraordinary IMCO Committee meeting in the European Parliament. Finance Minister Alexandru Nazare highlighted Bucharest's speed, operational capacity, and experience managing one of the EU's most complex external borders, positioning the capital as a strategic hub for economic and digital security. He emphasized the evolving role of customs beyond tax collection, including safeguarding the single market, product safety, and fair competition, and proposed that EUCA serve as a centre for risk management and reliable customs data. Bucharest's technical and educational infrastructure, IT ecosystem, international connectivity, rapid integration of foreign staff, and employee services were presented as key advantages. Nine member states applied by November 2025, and the European Commission submitted evaluations on January 20, 2026, with co-legislators set to decide the final EUCA location.

International News

Europe

EU Tobacco Tax Proposal Faces Coordinated Pushback.

The European Commission suspects a coordinated effort to skew its public consultation on a proposed tobacco tax hike, with thousands of anonymous submissions (including fake entries posing as health experts) flooding in during the final hours, according to Tobacco Journal. The plan would more than double the EU-wide minimum tobacco tax to €215 per 1,000 cigarettes, though Cyprus has suggested €200 and more implementation time. Alongside the tax reform, the Commission aims to update rules for e-cigarettes, heated tobacco, and nicotine pouches in 2026, with the European Parliament calling for tighter marketing, flavour, and packaging restrictions.

Norway Bans Private Tobacco Imports.

As of January 1, 2026, **Norway has prohibited private individuals from ordering tobacco and nicotine products from abroad**, Norwegian Customs announced. The ban covers online, postal, phone, and other remote purchases, including cigarettes, snus, cigars, heated tobacco, waterpipe tobacco, nicotine vapes and e-liquids, flavoured nicotine-free e-cigarettes, and products designed to hide health warnings. Exceptions exist for certain non-nicotine items, and nicotine e-cigarettes can still be imported for personal smoking cessation under medicinal law. Only licensed importers may legally bring such products into Norway, while illegal imports may be seized, destroyed, and uncompensated.

Germany Cigarette Sales Flat as Vaping Surges.

Tax-paid cigarette sales in Germany edged up slightly in 2025, rising 0.2% to 66.4 billion sticks, while next-generation products posted far stronger growth, according to Tobacco Journal. Sales of e-cigarette and vaping liquids jumped 18.2% year-on-year to 1.5 million litres, highlighting a continued shift away from traditional smoking. Despite last year's marginal increase, long-term cigarette consumption remains sharply lower, with per-capita use more than halving since 1991. Other tobacco products mostly declined, including fine-cut tobacco and cigars, while pipe tobacco saw modest growth. Shisha tobacco sales fell nearly 9% following the introduction of separate excise duties in 2022.

UK Vape Ban Hits Convenience Stores Hard.

UK convenience stores are seeing a sharp drop in vape sales following last year's ban on disposable vapes, with unit sales down 20.8% and value sales 12.7%, according to Tobacco Journal. Fewer customers, lower turnover, and higher operating costs are straining retailers, as slower adoption of reusable alternatives and larger multi-use kits reduce visit frequency. Managing inventory has also grown more complex, with over 2,000 new vape barcodes added in 2025. While tobacco remains the top category, the sector's market share fell to 30.3%, with an 8% value drop and 13.4% volume decline, highlighting the significant impact of regulatory changes.

USA

No relevant updates.