

# Consumer advocacy in Tobacco Harm Reduction

Seminar for Tobacco Harm Reduction Scholars, 22 November 2022

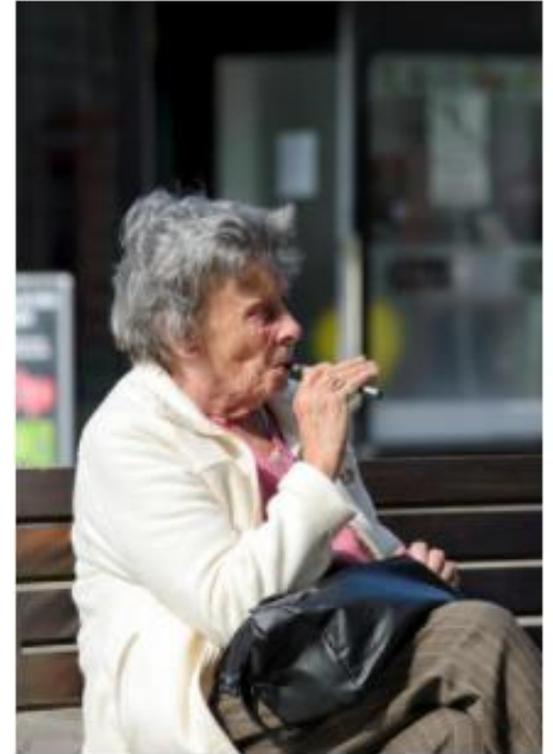
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# Consumer advocacy in Tobacco Harm Reduction

1. Who are the consumer advocates?
2. Why did consumers get organised?
3. Why is the consumer voice vital?
4. What are the challenges?
5. How can you support the consumer voice, and learn more?
6. Questions / discussion

## People vaping in London, UK



> Harm Reduct J. 2021 Oct 23;18(1):109. doi: 10.1186/s12954-021-00556-7.

## Estimation of the global number of e-cigarette users in 2020

Tomasz Jerzyński<sup>1 2</sup>, Gerry V Stimson<sup>3</sup>, Harry Shapiro<sup>4</sup>, Grzegorz Król<sup>4</sup>

*“For the year 2020, the projection is for 68 m vapers globally.”*

### UPDATED

February 2022

## 82 million vapers worldwide in 2021: the GSTHR estimate

Harm reduction options are already being used by an estimated 112 million people worldwide, with approximately 82 million using nicotine vaping devices, 20 million using heated tobacco products and 10 million using US smokeless and snus.



Tobacco Harm Reduction products



# Consumer advocacy

*“What do you mean, they want to take it away?”*



# Why is the consumer voice essential?

1. We have the right to be central to the conversation
  - We have the right to choose to use products which improve our health.
  - We - along with people who smoke- are the people most affected (and we should **all** be listening more to people who smoke!)
2. We have key insights into how the smoking problem might be fixed.
3. We have expertise
  - on what consumers want and need
  - on how the products work
  - on how consumers use the products

Our experiences and expertise are invaluable to scientists, regulators, politicians and smokers.

**Nothing About Us. Without Us**

# Early THR consumer advocacy in Europe – thousands of people email their MEPs

Dear Julie Hilling,

I am writing to you to express my deep concerns over the recent EU Proposals (Dec 19 2012) for new laws controlling tobacco and nicotine products like e-cigarettes. There are products now included in the proposal to the EU tobacco directive that were not in before. Apparently the EU wants to determine that nicotine-containing products with a maximum concentration of 4 milligrams per millilitre will be freely available on the market. All higher concentrations have to be approved as medicinal product. This would effectively render "Vaping" (more commonly known as using e-cigarettes) as useless to the vast majority of vapers as the level of nicotine suggested by the EU would be non effective IN KEEPING MOST VAPERS OFF CIGARETTES. There would be no option for me and most others to return to smoking cigarettes. I do NOT want to put my health at risk now that i have found an alternative way of using my nicotine.

17 07 2013, 20:00

**tommy2bad**  
Registered User  
★★★★★  
  
Join Date: Jun 2011  
Posts: 4,240  
Adverts | Friends

motorrad, you seem to misunderstand the situation. What is proposed by the EU is that all ecigs be regulated as medicinal products on the grounds that as they are used by people to quit smoking then they are a medicine by function, i.e. they serve the same function as an already existing produce, NRT. We opose this for several reasons, primiraly because medicine by function isn't a legal grownd to for clascification as medicine. Also because medicine regulation is so restrictive as to render ecigs inefective as smoking alternatives which is counterproductive if reducing smoking prevelence is their stated objective. Their are several other reasons, I sugest you read Clive Bates blog to get a good overview of all the options. <http://www.clivebates.com/> Presuming the EU fail in their attempt to regulate as medicines, I fear that they will then attempt to impose tobacco regulations, another fail if reducing smoking prevelence is what their seeking. What Rielly decides to do will be in line with EU law and if it turns out to be medicine then were stuck with that, if it goes the tobacco route then Rielly cant regulate as medicines. If what we want to see ( existing regulations applied with the addition of age restriction) wins out it will be possible for Rielly to attempt the medical route but that's at least 3 years down the line. James will have bigger concerns by then if he has any job at all. Whoever has the position of minister for health might try medicalization but the EU will have an established regulatory system and it will be hard to run counter to that.

Right now the most imminent threat is in the EU, I think rielly in announcing that he is considering medical licencing was attempting to influence the progress of the TPD not stating any intention he has to stir up another hornets nest. Things are already politically shaky for James, if it wasn't for Enda he would be toast by now.

First concentrate on the EU, no harm getting out TD in a row either but the MEP's are where we need to work between now and October.

Quote + Reply

...and held protests and started petitions



6 February 2014

Dear Mr. Schulz,

We, the independent electronic cigarette users associations from across Europe, are deeply concerned about the e-cigarette provisions contained in the TPD.

We know, from the testimony of hundreds of thousands of vapers who exchange their personal accounts on user forums, that the majority of them have quit tobacco thanks to e-cigarettes; with most of the rest having substantially reduced their tobacco consumption. A few, who had abandoned e-cigs for a while, return to them thanks to new products arriving on the market.

We know that virtually all vapers who are aware of the legislative proposals being submitted to the EU Parliament find them unacceptable.

We have read the letter that eminent scientists have sent to the Health Commissioner (<http://www.nicotinepolicy.net/n-s-p/672-scientific-errors-in-proposed-eu-tobacco-products-directive>) and are aware that the proposals do not have any evidential basis; worse, that the Commission appears to have misquoted and distorted the work of those scientists. Their subsequent

## E-Zigarette in Gefahr



IG-ED started this petition to Präsident des Europäischen Parlaments, Europäisches Parlament Martin Schulz and 1 other

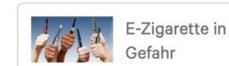
### Revision der EU-Tabakrichtlinie kommt Verbot gleich

Am 19.12.2012 veröffentlichte die Europäische Kommission einen Vorschlag über die Revision der Richtlinie für Tabakerzeugnisse. In diesem wurde erstmals die E-Zigarette,

<https://www.change.org/p/e-zigarette-in-gefahr>

**Petition Closed**

This petition had 27,523 supporters



Share on Facebook

Send a Facebook message

Send an email to friends

Tweet to your followers

Copy link

**Europska komisija može zabraniti elektronske cigarete, dovoljno je da se samo tri zemlje za to odluče**

**[Brussels balloon protest: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sNjcUiF-PI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sNjcUiF-PI)**

# Success!

## Breaking News: Vaper Activism Pays Off with EU Vote Against Ecig Ban

By James Dunworth / Industry / 4 Comments

Back in July, when a EU committee voted for the ban on e-cigarettes, I [wrote](#) that the fight would go on.

It did, with a huge wave of vapers across Europe writing to their MEPs, many of whom reported receiving hundreds of letters from constituents.

Vapers also garnered support from some MEPs, including the very active Rebecca Taylor of the Lib Dems and Martin Callanan of the Conservatives, who not only supported vapers but advised us on how to campaign against the ban.

Many of the letters were so informed that some anti-nicotine campaigners claim they couldn't possibly come from ordinary e-cigarette users but must be from tobacco stooges.

Many vapers also indicated that [they were prepared to change their vote to defend their right to vape](#):

<https://www.ecigarettedirect.co.uk/ashtray-blog/2013/10/breaking-news-vaper-activism-pays-off-with-eu-vote-against-ecig-ban.html>

# Examples of activities which THR consumer groups engage in – taken from NNA UK

## About Us

The activities of the Board and Associates to date include:

- speaking at national and international smoking cessation and public health conferences,
- briefing media on new nicotine products on a reactive and proactive basis,
- briefing national and European parliamentarians,
- briefing members of national and international tobacco control organisations,
- publishing commentaries in the mass media and in professional and scientific journals,
- making submissions in response to public consultations (eg to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and the Committee of Advertising Practice),
- supporting the establishment of practical and sensible product standards,
- engaging with members of Royal Colleges of medicine,
- advising local NHS public health bodies, NHS services and third sector health organisations,
- advising travel and transport operators and managers and owners of public venues about the use of electronic cigarettes in public places, and
- using social media (mainly twitter, Facebook and blogs) to enhance public understanding.



Tobacco Harm Reduction products



# Global and regional THR consumer groups

## Global

**INNCO** (International Network of Nicotine Consumer Organisations)



<https://innco.org/>

## Regional

**ARDT Iberoamerica** (Asociación por la Reducción de daños del Tabaquismo Iberoamérica)



<https://www.facebook.com/ardtiberamerica>

**CAPHRA** (Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates)



<https://caphraorg.net/>

**CASA** (Campaign for Safer Alternatives Africa)



<http://www.safer-alternatives.org/>

**ETHRA** (European Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates)



<https://ethra.co/>

# Logos for some of the THR consumer groups



Taken from the NGO Zone banner at the Global Forum on Nicotine 2022, designed by Bartosz Fatyga

# Challenges for consumer advocates

stigma, *n.*

OED | Oxford English Dictionary  
The definitive record of the English language

2.

*a. figurative.* A mark of disgrace or infamy; a sign of severe censure or condemnation, regarded as impressed on a person or thing; a 'brand'.



## Challenges for consumer advocates - money



New paper coming soon: a global survey of THR consumer groups

- Based on survey replies from 54 organisations
- Finds that:
  - The groups are mostly run by volunteers
  - Just 7 groups had contracted or paid staff
  - 31 organisations had no funding
  - Total funding for organisations surveyed was just \$309,810

# Minister reaffirms support for vaping

PUBLISHED : 14 JAN 2022 AT 13:01

WRITER: AEKARACH SATTABURUTH

Digital Economy and Society Minister Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn said on Friday he would continue efforts to legalise e-cigarettes, which were safer than tobacco and would bring in added tax revenue.

He confirmed his position when he met a **group of people** campaigning for legalisation at his ministry on Friday.

Mr Chaiwut said legalisation of e-cigarettes would enable the country to tax sales and would provide people who found themselves unable to quit smoking with a safer option.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2247535/minister-reaffirms-support-for-vaping>



# Consumers need your support

*You don't have to be a consumer to support the consumer voice*

- National consumer groups are listed on INNCO and regional group websites
- Visit consumer group websites, follow their social media accounts
- Sign up to their mailing list, if they have one
- Join their Facebook group, like their Facebook page
- Share their articles and social media posts
- If you hold a THR event, include a consumer speaker



# Consumer orientated news websites



<https://www.thevapingtoday.com/>

Spanish and English



<https://fr.vapingpost.com/>

French

<https://www.vapingpost.com/>

English



[vapers.org.uk/category/latest-news/](https://vapers.org.uk/category/latest-news/) English



[vaping360.com/](https://vaping360.com/)

English



[planetofthevapes.co.uk/news](https://planetofthevapes.co.uk/news)

English

Recommended reading:

## The Right Side of History

<https://gsth.org/resources/thr-reports/the-right-side-of-history/>



See chapters 3, 4 and 8 for discussion about the role of consumers in the Tobacco Harm Reduction story.

SLIDES NOT IN USE



