

The Mental Health Imperative

Recognizing Addiction as Healthcare, Not Moral Failure

For the 24 percent of Europeans who smoke, dependence is a mental health condition demanding compassionate, evidence-based intervention. Yet our tobacco policies often reflect outdated moralism rather than a modern understanding of addiction science. We would not deny a diabetic access to insulin alternatives, so why do we deny smokers access to safer nicotine products?

The Swedish model demonstrates what happens when policymakers treat nicotine dependence through a healthcare lens. By providing multiple pathways to cessation—from complete abstinence to long-term use of dramatically safer alternatives—Sweden has achieved what punitive approaches could not: sustainable behavior change that prioritizes wellbeing over ideological purity. Greece's recent pivot from prohibition to harm reduction similarly acknowledges that supporting smokers requires meeting them where they are, not where we wish they were.

Mental health professionals understand that recovery rarely follows a straight line. The nations achieving the fastest smoking declines recognize this reality, offering a spectrum of support that includes innovative nicotine products as legitimate tools for harm reduction. When we frame tobacco policy as a healthcare issue rather than a moral judgment, we create space for pragmatic solutions that actually save lives.

We Are Innovation and Path to Smoke-free's Briefing Paper [“The EU Case for Innovative Nicotine Products”](#) demonstrates how Sweden, Czechia, and Greece have transformed their approach to nicotine dependence by treating it as a healthcare challenge rather than a moral failing. The evidence shows that compassionate, medically-informed policies can become powerful tools for genuine recovery rather than continued stigmatization. We invite you to review how these healthcare-centered strategies have achieved unprecedented success in supporting millions of Europeans on their journey toward better health and wellbeing.

PATH TO SMOKE-FREE

Path to Smoke-Free is a comprehensive analytical platform developed by We Are Innovation that reveals how countries can harness innovation to defeat smoking and accelerate their journey toward smoke-free status. Drawing from Sweden's remarkable success in dramatically reducing smoking rates far below global averages—we identified three key elements: Accessibility, Acceptability, and Affordability of innovative nicotine products. Our platform combines comprehensive policy data with real insights from Swedish ex-smokers, offering interactive tools to compare how countries are harnessing innovation to defeat smoking. The platform features powerful forecasting charts that project smoking prevalence and when countries will reach smoke-free status under three scenarios: current policy trajectories, outcomes if countries matched Sweden's success rate, or results following the combined pace of leading nations. Policymakers, researchers, and health professionals can explore evidence-based strategies that could help their countries reach smoke-free targets faster, guided by proven success stories. Discover how your country could accelerate its journey to smoke-free status at <https://pathtosmokefree.global/>.

WE ARE INNOVATION

We Are Innovation is a dynamic network of individuals and institutions who deeply believe in innovation's power to drive progress and solve the world's most pressing problems. With 50 think tanks, foundations, and NGOs based worldwide, We Are Innovation represents the diverse voices of a global civil society committed to advancing human creativity, adopting new technologies, and promoting innovative solutions. Through our collaborative approach and cutting-edge expertise, we are driving global transformative change. To learn more about our work, visit us at <https://weareinnovation.global/>.

We Are Innovation
The Future Is Calling. And We Are Ready to Answer

