

Press Release

Wednesday 26 August 2015



Following [publication of formal advice from England's public health service](#), French associations campaigning against addiction, together with electronic cigarette users, hereby request the government to revise and complement its anti-tobacco programme.

The British government has just published a report (i) commissioned from Public Health England that is very favourable towards electronic cigarettes (PHE 19 Aug 2015).

Acknowledging the fact that e-cigarettes have become the means most used by smokers to quit tobacco and that they contribute to reduce tobacco consumption both amongst long-term and young adult smokers, this practical report recommends that they be considered a key tool in the fight against smoking and should, therefore, be appropriately promoted towards smokers and in medical practices.

Great Britain is thus on the way to become the country with the lowest prevalence of smoking in the world. It uses 3 levers that are considered efficient in the campaign against tobacco:

- A policy of high tobacco pricing
- Tobacco denormalisation
- Endorsement of the e-cigarette as a means to quit tobacco (by informing public opinion, through advice from doctors and Stop Smoking centres, the availability of high nicotine concentrations, unlimited usage depending on location).

In particular the report confirms that the e-cigarette carries a similar very low level of risk as nicotine replacement products; that the risk of passive vaping is negligible; and that it does not encourage initiation into tobacco smoking (its use is awkward for non-smokers and only marginally addictive). The report also notes that the confusion between tobacco and e-cigarettes has caused many smokers to fear the latter as much as the former; a tendency which it recommends should be reversed.

This report from Public Health England on e-cigarettes reinforces the views held by the Associations who have signed this letter. E-cigarettes should be included in and promoted by the campaign against tobacco and should have its place in the National Plan to Reduce Tobacco Smoking (le Plan National de Réduction du Tabagisme or PNRT).

The Associations call on the government, the members of the National Assembly and Senators to follow England's example that over decades has proven the most successful in

reducing smoking prevalence. They should revisit the draft laws on e-cigarettes which, by imposing too many restrictions, will discourage their use (ii).

Now that AFNOR's product standards are coming into effect, enabling the provision of safe devices and e-liquid, we regret the distrust expressed about this tool. Such suspicion ignores the lessons learnt about Risk Reduction which recognise the value of tools created and developed by users to meet their needs. Such tools facilitate the involvement of their users in a risk reduction process and thereby encourage behaviour change. The actions required to combat smoking should be multiple and include such elements as plain packaging, e-cigarettes and nicotine substitutes; valuing and insisting upon their complementarity. They should be associated with each other to achieve the paramount objective of reducing tobacco consumption, by multiplying the entry routes through medical prescriptions, the support of user associations, ensuring the availability as a consumer product, and by other means.

The signatory associations hope that publication of this report will provide the opportunity to complement the policies being envisaged for France.

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(i) The report's short version (6 pages plus graphs) is very clear:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/454517/Ecigarettes_a_firm_foundation_for_evidence_based_policy_and_practice.pdf

(ii) 1. Health Bill: Amendment AS1404 to ban all e-cigarette publicity. This amendment is counter-productive because use of the e-cigarette should instead be promoted to achieve a real reduction in smoking prevalence.

2. Health Bill: Amendment AS1413 to ban vaping from public areas. To succeed in quitting tobacco, vapers need to use their e-cigarettes throughout the day so as to achieve consistent nicotine doses as with patches. To prevent such use encourages a relapse back to tobacco because of nicotine privation. Since passive vaping does not exist, there is no reason to ban vaping in public areas.

3. Health Bill: Article 53 to transpose the Tobacco Products Directive. The Directive's unjustified restrictions will serve only to offer the market place to the kind of e-cigarettes sold by the tobacco industry. These products are inefficient within the context of a policy to quit smoking. Let us work together to ensure that this Directive is transposed in such way as to promote risk reduction objectives and not to keep smokers in the clutches of tobacco.