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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(19.1.2026)

The Commission considers that the decline in smoking rates results from the implementation of tobacco control measures, in particular, those set out in the Tobacco Products Directive 2014/40/EU¹, the Tobacco Advertising Directive 2003/33/EC², and the Tobacco Taxation Directive 2011/64/EU³.

Using smoke-free tobacco and nicotine products, as opposed to combustible smoking, is not reducing risk to health. There are no safe levels of tobacco or nicotine consumption, including from smoke-free tobacco and nicotine products. In addition to their negative health effects, such products may act as a gateway to nicotine addiction and, ultimately, to smoking.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 14 million adolescents aged 13–15 years are currently using electronic cigarettes globally and those aged 13–15 years are nine times more likely than adults to use electronic cigarettes⁴. As the WHO noted, a non-smoker who uses Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), including nicotine containing e-cigarettes, may become addicted to nicotine, making it difficult to stop using ENDS, or may become addicted to conventional tobacco products⁵. Dual use of e-cigarettes and conventional cigarettes, which is common, is at least as dangerous and likely more dangerous than smoking conventional cigarettes or using e-cigarettes alone⁶.

¹ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/40/oj>.

² <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/33/oj>.

³ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/64/oj>.

⁴ <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/2eca3aea-b772-4272-a2ae-6fa26f3f9cd5/content>.

⁵ <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/tobacco-e-cigarettes>.

⁶ Ibid.