

Combating illicit trade in tobacco products: Statement by Commissioner Andriukaitis on the EU's adoption of an EU-wide track and trace system

Today the EU has taken a big step forward in combatting the illicit trade in tobacco products. The new EU-wide track and trace system adopted today will ensure that tobacco products in the EU are easily traceable with a [unique identifier](#) for each product. In addition, we are also making sure that tobacco products meet specific security requirements, with at least five types of authentication elements required per packet.

*The track and trace system and the security requirements should be in place **by 20 May 2019** for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco and **by 20 May 2024** for all other tobacco products (such as cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco products).*

Tobacco still remains the biggest avoidable cause of premature death in the EU, and the illicit trade in tobacco facilitates access to cigarettes and other tobacco products, including for children and young adults. In addition, millions of euros in tax revenues are lost every year as a result of the illicit trade. I am confident that these measures will improve public health and deliver significant economic benefits for the EU and its citizens.

Background

The [Tobacco Products Directive \(2014/40/EU\)](#) provides for the establishment of an **EU-wide track and trace system** for the legal supply chain of tobacco products and a system of **security features** to help citizens and authorities detect illicit products.

The legal acts adopted today lay out the measures that must be taken by EU Member States and economic operators in order to establish and operate a traceability system for tobacco products, ensuring that all packets of tobacco produced in, destined for, or placed on the EU market, are marked with a unique identifier. They also set out the requirements for the obligatory security features to be applied to tobacco products.

The legal acts adopted today are in line with the [Framework Convention on Tobacco Control \(FCTC\) Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products](#), which the EU ratified in 2016.

More information

[1] <http://www.who.int/fctc/protocol/en/>