UK Upholds Radical New Tobacco Laws

In 2014, the UK passed a new law aimed at drastically reducing tobacco's marketing appeal. The law, of course, was challenged by four of the world's largest tobacco companies, British American Tobacco, Imperial Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International, and Philip Morris International. The High Court dismissed all grounds of their case.

Uniform Packaging for Cigarettes

The new law calls for uniform packaging for cigarettes. All cigarette packages will be a uniform color, a drab olive green. The package must include pictures that are health warnings, which must cover 65% of the front and back. Additional warnings are required on the top. No promotional statements (such as "free of additives") will be allowed. The brand name of each company will be the only distinguishing factor, but the name will be presented in a uniform font. Hand rolled tobacco packages will be the same color.

The new regulations will not allow companies to promote their products. The marketing power of trademarks and promotional statements will be eliminated.

The new law and separate EU laws are all aimed at smoking reduction. These laws include the elimination of 10 cigarette packs; menthol cigarettes and skinny cigarettes will be banned by 2020. New rules will regulate e-cigarettes and herbal products as well.

Previous Smoking Regulation Laws in

the EU

At this time, 17 European countries have adopted smoke-free laws regulating public smoking. Ireland, Greece, Malta, Bulgaria, Spain, Hungary, and the UK have instituted a complete ban on smoking in enclosed public places, in workplaces, and on public transport. Limited exceptions are allowed.

The 2001 EU directive on tobacco products banned terms like “mild,” “low tar,” and “light, and required packaging to include 2 warnings. The first compulsory warning is either “tobacco kills” or “tobacco can seriously harm you and others around you”. The second can be chosen from a list of 14 choices. One example is “smoking causes fatal lung cancer”. The directive also set maximum limits for nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide in cigarettes and banned snus (an oral tobacco product that is still legal in Sweden).

Televised tobacco advertising and tobacco sponsorship were prohibited in 1989. In 2003, the **Directive on Tobacco Advertising** banned cross-border advertising of tobacco products in printed media, radio, and online services and prohibited sponsorship of cross-border events.

Current Statistics Regarding Smoking in the U.S.

The CDC states that smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States with 1 in 5 deaths (480,000 deaths per year) attributed to the practice. Their latest statistics for the year 2014 report 16.8% of American adults (18 or older) were current smokers. That’s 40 million smokers. This percentage is down from 20.9% in 2005.

The percentage of the population who smoke does vary from state to state and region to region as well as age, gender,

education, income, disability, and sexual orientation.

The highest percentage of adult smokers live in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Guam (25.3% – 29.2%); the lowest live in Utah and California (9.7% < 13.6%).

Regions Ranked According to the Percentage of Residents Who Smoke:

- West – 13.1%
- Northeast – 15.3%
- South – 17.2%
- Midwest – 20.7%

Percentage of the Population Who Smoke According to Age:

- 18–24 – 16.7%
- 25–44 – 20.0%
- 45–64 -18.0%
- 65 and older – 8.5%

Other Interesting Stats

Statistics showed higher use among men (18.8%) than women (14.8%).

Americans below the poverty level were more likely to smoke (26.3%) than those at or above the poverty level (15.2%).

Americans with a graduate degree ranked the lowest (5.4%). It is interesting to note that those who obtained a GED were the most likely to be smokers (43%), nearly twice as likely than those who never completed high school (22.9%) and fully twice as likely as those with a high school diploma (21.7%).

Lesbian/gay/bisexual adults were more likely to be smokers (23.9%) than straight adults (26.6%).

Native American and Alaskan Native Americans ranked the highest (29.2%) while non-Hispanic Asian Americans ranked the lowest (9.5%).

Adults with limitations/disabilities were more likely to smoke (21.9%) than adults without limitations or disabilities (16.1%).

Conclusion

It will be interesting to see how the new laws affect sales in the UK and EU and whether the U.S. would ever consider a similar action. Considering the power of the corporate world in the U.S. economy and politics, it is unlikely.

Recommended Reading:

- *How To Quit Smoking Naturally*
- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*
- *Heal Gum Disease and Cavities Naturally – Step by Step*
- *Hypothyroidism – Natural Remedies, Causes, and How To Heal the Thyroid*

Sources:

- *Tobacco laws: Bid to overturn packaging rules dismissed* – BBC
- *Tobacco, Smoke-Free Environments* – European Commission Public Health
- *Snus – EU Ban on Snus Sales* – Tobacco Tactics
- *Q&A: The Fight Against Tobacco in the EU* – European Commission Press Release Database
- *Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults in the United States* – CDC
- *MPs pass legislation to introduce standardized cigarette packaging* – The Guardian