

CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

The delegates to this conference warmly thank the Government of the Slovak Republic for hosting this important international meeting of tobacco control experts.

The future health of the people of the European Union, particularly those in accession and candidate countries, can be improved dramatically with control of tobacco use. Smoking accounts for 85,000 premature deaths every year in the ten new member states in middle age (35-69 years) alone. Smoking has accounted for most of the gap in mortality between these countries and the existing fifteen EU countries, leading to substantial economic losses.

Taxation of tobacco products leading to price increases is the single most important measure to reduce smoking and has been shown to be highly effective in countries of all income levels.

However, tax/price is only one component of a comprehensive strategy on tobacco. All countries need properly funded and sustained tobacco control programs to drive down smoking rates across their populations. Some countries have successfully earmarked a proportion of tobacco tax revenue to ensure that their tobacco control programs are resourced to the level necessary to achieve significant year-on-year reductions in smoking. In a number of jurisdictions, these programs have been part of a wider health promotion strategy funded through earmarked tobacco taxes.

Strong taxation regimes, including measures to address smuggling, are vitally important to the urgent task of tackling the tobacco epidemic. Close cooperation and collaboration between governments on this issue is essential, especially now between all EU and candidate countries.

This conference urges all governments to establish high and rising taxes on tobacco products (renewing efforts to tackle tobacco smuggling in collaboration with neighbouring nations) and to adequately resource comprehensive tobacco control programs directly or through health promotion foundations.