

Sign on Letter to the Government of Türkiye

October 1, 2026

To: The Government of the Republic of Türkiye

RE: Türkiye's Reported Overhaul of Tobacco Law

Turkish and international [media](#) have reported that the Ministry of Health has prepared a major tobacco control proposal that could move rapidly through the political and legislative process before the end of 2026.

According to [Türkiye Gazetesi](#), work on the draft is expected in the upcoming weeks, with a submission to the Parliament in November, with the purported goal that the legislation be enacted before Parliamentary deliberations on the national budget begin.

The complete draft has not been published. Its exact wording, formal status and legal implications therefore cannot yet be independently assessed.

Reported Measures

According to *Türkiye Gazetesi*, the proposal includes the following measures.

If included, these measures would strengthen public health:

- A ban, beginning on 1 January 2040, on the sale of tobacco products and their provision to other persons for consumption;
- Mandatory storage of tobacco products in closed cabinets that are not visible from outside retail outlets;
- Electronic age verification and electronic monitoring of tobacco sales;
- Further standardisation of tobacco packaging and product dimensions;
- A ban on smoking in the outdoor areas of restaurants, cafés and similar establishments;
- A 10-metre smoke-free perimeter around schools, hospitals, public buildings and places of worship; and
- Smoking bans in playgrounds, parks, walking paths and exercise areas.

These measures would be an improvement to the current law and would position Turkey as a leader in global health. However, there are also concerns about some elements of the proposed legislation, as reported in the media.

The proposal also includes the following elements, which, if included, would be of concern to the global public health community:

- Designated smoking sections covering no more than 10% of an establishment's total usable area and measuring between 2 and 20 square meters;

- A prohibition on food and beverage service in these smoking sections;
- A requirement that the sections must not be visible from outside;
- A prohibition on access by persons under 18;

Enclosed or Semi-Enclosed Smoking Rooms

Türkiye has maintained a 100% smoke-free requirement for the enclosed areas of restaurants, cafés, and other hospitality venues since 2009. Its current legislation does not provide a general exemption allowing hospitality businesses to establish enclosed or ventilated smoking rooms.

The reported conditions for the proposed smoking sections raise a serious concern that this protection may be weakened.

The sections would be subject to limits based on the establishment's total usable area, a minimum and maximum size, a prohibition on service, exclusion of minors and a requirement that smoking must not be visible from outside.

The crucial point is to not debate the physical design but to ensure there is no introduction of enclosed smoking rooms which would create a new exception to Türkiye's existing 100% indoor smoking ban.

Any provision permitting enclosed, isolated or ventilated smoking rooms in hospitality venues would constitute a major reversal of existing protection and would be inconsistent with the principles established in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Article 8 Guidelines.

Lack of civil society input into the process

The proposal could reportedly reach Parliament in November, yet the complete draft text has not been made available for independent review.

Without publication of the draft and consultation records, it is difficult for the global public health community to assess whether the proposal will indeed provide further protection to the Turkish population from tobacco and nicotine addiction. Under these conditions it is also impossible to determine whether the proposal complies with Türkiye's obligations under Articles 5.3 and 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which call on countries to protect public health policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry.

The signatories of this letter call on the Turkish government to:

1. Share the complete draft and its explanatory memorandum for comment and support.
2. Maintain Türkiye's 100% indoor smoking ban.
3. Disclose all institutions, experts, commercial actors and civil society organizations consulted during preparation of the proposal, in accordance with WHO FCTC Article 5.3.
4. Exclude the tobacco industry from the legislative process, in accordance with WHO FCTC Article 5.3.

5. Publish the dates, participants, subjects and records of any interactions with the tobacco industry or actors working to further its interests, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.
6. Implement a process to receive comments and input from civil society and the public health community before political approval and parliamentary consideration in alignment with Article 4.7 of the WHO FCTC which establishes that the participation of civil society is essential.

The signatories encourage the adoption of the reported measures concerning retail visibility, age verification, expanded smoke-free outdoor areas and future removal of nicotine products from the market by 2040, as they represent important advances for public health. Their success would also be amplified by increased cessation support for people addicted to any tobacco or nicotine products.

Signatories remain available to consult on the process and ensure strong public health measures are in place for Türkiye.

Sincerely,

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)
ADEC
African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA)
Aktionsbündnis Nichtraucher e.V.
ASH Canada
ASH Scotland, UK
Asociația pentru Chirurgie Toracică Modernă în Craiova
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development
Cancer Control Office, King Hussein Cancer Center
Cancer Society Auckland Northland New Zealand
Children's Environmental Health Foundation CEHF
Citizens Assisting Relief Efforts (CARE)
CLAS Coalition for Americas' Health
Comité national contre le tabagisme, CNCT
Corporate Accountability
DABO Detroit
Dr. Hafız Cemal Vakfı (Dr Hafız Cemal Foundation)
Fowenguep Foundation
Green Crescent Health Development Initiative
Healthier Lyon County
Healthy Romania Generation 2035 Association
İnsan Sağlığı ve Eğitim Vakfı (Human Health and Education Foundation)
İstanbul Verem Savaş Derneği (Istanbul Tuberculosis Control Association)
Making It Count
Malaysian Pharmacists Society
Malaysian Women's Action for Tobacco Control and Health (MyWATCH)
Meqoamia Community Development Organization

Mozambican Association of Public Health
Ñande Bolivia
Norwegian Cancer Society
ONG La Grande Puissance de Dieu
Sağlığa Evet Derneği (Yes to Health Association, aka Health Institute
Association)
Sauti ya Mtoto Foundation (Voice of Child Foundation)
Slovenian Coalition for Public Health, Environment and Tobacco Control
South African Tobacco-Free Youth Forum (SATFYF)
Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
Swiss Association for Tobacco Control
Tanzania Tobacco Control Forum (TTCF)
TIME - for a nicotine-free future
Tobacco & Nicotine Free Life Coalition
Tobacco Control Alliance of Georgia
Tobacco Control Alliance of Georgia
Tobacco Free Association of Zambia
Tobacco Free Portfolios
Zambia Heart and Stroke Foundation