11TH EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON TOBACCO CONTROL · ISTANBUL · 4–6 NOVEMBER 2026

ISTANBUL DECLARATION 2026

Protecting Children from Nicotine Addiction

The 11th European Conference on Tobacco Control (ECTC) was held in Istanbul from 4 to 6 November 2026 under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. Its central theme was protecting children from nicotine addiction. At the close of the Conference, the co-organisers, the European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP) and Turkish Green Crescent Society (Yeşilay), agreed to issue this Declaration.

The strategic partnership between ENSP and Green Crescent has brought the Conference's message to a wider international audience.

Building on this partnership, we call upon the global community to unite in protecting children from the use of addictive nicotine products.

The message of the 11th ECTC places the child at the heart of the global effort to combat tobacco use and nicotine addiction.

It unites generations. It unites peoples. It unites cultures. It unites faiths.

We recognise that

Taking into account the scientific evidence and positions presented at the Conference, we recognise that:

- The increasing use of nicotine products by minors constitutes an urgent cross-border challenge.
- Nicotine is a psychoactive and highly addictive substance, and exposure during childhood and adolescence raises particular concerns for brain development.
- The problem is global in scale and requires a coordinated global response.
- Children's rights to health, development and special protection must be a primary consideration in all relevant policies.
- Existing legislative and regulatory frameworks have failed to protect children from the systematic promotion of nicotine products leading to addiction.
- The use of flavours, aromas, colours, shapes and device designs to draw minors into nicotine addiction should never have been permitted.
- Lengthy legislative revision processes, including those concerning relevant European Union directives, must not delay immediate protective action.

Urgent actions

We call upon the international community to take the following urgent actions:

1. Establish the protection of children from nicotine addiction as a central national and international priority.
2. Explicitly recognise the particular vulnerability of children's developing brains to nicotine.
3. Immediately prohibit product features and marketing practices that target children.
4. Immediately develop and implement targeted educational and communication programmes.

Protecting children from nicotine addiction is a global obligation. Action cannot wait.