

New Action Plan Against Illicit Tobacco Trade



Thomas Wahl

News

On 7 December 2018, the Commission published the 2nd Action Plan to fight the illicit tobacco trade ([Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, COM\(2018\) 846 final](#)). The action plan covers the period 2018-2020. The Commission stresses that the illicit tobacco trade can only be curbed by a combination of policy and enforcement measures.

It builds on the 1st Action Plan of 2013, its evaluation in 2017, and the WHO Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (FCTC Protocol). The FCTC Protocol was actively negotiated by the European Commission and entered into force on 25 September 2018.

According to the new plan envisaged by the Commission in the years to come, the following should be pursued:

- Fully exploiting the new FCTC Protocol's potential as a global instrument and forum to curb the illicit tobacco trade;
- Engaging key source and transit countries via various frameworks for cooperation;
- Focusing on some of the key input materials going into the illicit manufacture of tobacco products, ranging from raw tobacco and cigarette filters to manufacturing and packing equipment;
- Raising consumer awareness of the dangers of buying illicit tobacco products and of the direct links to organised crime as a means of reducing demand;
- Continuing to invest in intelligence gathering and analysis as a basis for effective targeting of policy and operational measures.

A concrete list of actions is contained in an [Annex to the Communication](#).

The illicit tobacco trade is estimated to cause an annual €10 billion loss in public revenue in the EU and its Member States.

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