

# European cardiologists urge smoking bans

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Wednesday is "World No Tobacco Day," and the European Society of Cardiology is observing the event by urging governments to ban smoking.

The Nice, France-headquartered, ESC also wants higher taxes on tobacco products to encourage people to not smoke.

"One of the objectives of the ESC is to decrease the number of smokers in Europe, which will reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease," said ESC President Michal Tendera. "To accomplish this we need the cooperation of politicians who can implement legislation that protects those who do not smoke from passive smoking, and that imposes high tax on cigarettes.

"Smoking bans and (high) tobacco taxes, introduced in several European countries, have proven to be extremely effective in reducing the number of smokers," he added.

The number of European smokers has dropped by 6 percent from levels 13 years ago, and 80 percent of Europeans told EU pollsters they would like comprehensive smoking bans implemented.

"Smoking is the biggest totally avoidable cause of death and disability known to mankind," said Ian Graham, chairman of the European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation. "Any support for the growth, distribution or sale of tobacco is indefensible on public health grounds."

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