



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
ENVIRONMENT

The Director-General

Brussels  
ENV.B.1/JR

To the petitioners of  
[www.zigarettenpfand.eu](http://www.zigarettenpfand.eu)

Dear Petitioners,

I would like to thank you for your petition promoting a deposit on cigarettes at the point of sale. Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius has asked me to reply on his behalf.

You were 133.432 in signing this petition showing your concern about an important source of pollution: tobacco products containing plastic filters. When preparing the [Directive on single-use plastics](#) ('SUP Directive') aiming to limit the impact of such plastics on the environment and the sea, the European Commission discovered that these products are the second most single-use plastic product found on the beaches of the Union. Based on this information, the Directive as adopted in July 2019 requires Member States to take a wide range of measures to ensure that fewer litter after consumption of tobacco products with plastic filters is abandoned.

The following measures apply:

- Marking Regulations

Member States must ensure that the packaging or product itself bears a conspicuous, clearly legible and indelible marking with information about the following matters: a) appropriate waste management options or waste disposal means to be avoided, and b) the presence of plastics in the product and the negative effect on the environment of litter. The rules on the harmonized marking specifications are laid down in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2020/2151](#). The pictograms used for this can be found at: [Marking specifications for single-use plastic products \(europa.eu\)](#).

- Extended Producer Responsibility

Member States must ensure that producers cover at least the costs of: a) the awareness-raising measures (see next point); b) cleaning up litter resulting from tobacco products with plastic filters and for the subsequent transport and treatment of that litter, and c) data gathering and reporting. In addition, Member States must ensure that producers cover the costs of the waste collection for tobacco products with plastic filters that are discarded in public collection systems. Costs may also involve setting up specific infrastructure for the waste collection for those products, such as appropriate waste receptacles in common litter hotspots. The extended producer responsibility schemes should also encourage

innovation leading to the development of sustainable alternatives to tobacco product filters containing plastic.

- Awareness Raising Measures

Member States must take measures to inform consumers and encourage responsible consumer behaviour in order to reduce litter. The [Waste Framework Directive](#) sets some rules to ensure environmentally sound management of waste. In particular, it establishes measures to protect the environment and human health from waste generation and related negative impacts and to prevent or reduce the overall effects of the use of resources by improving the efficiency of such use. To this end, Member States should draw up waste management plans on measures to combat and prevent all forms of litter production and for the cleaning up of all types of litter. All waste must be managed without endangering human health and the environment.

Member States must also take measures to prevent waste generation and establish waste prevention programs to reduce the amount of waste that is primarily created. Furthermore, the Directive contains specific obligations for the Member States to introduce separate collection of specific waste streams in order to prevent litter from occurring.

The duty to ensure compliance with EU law lies primarily with the Member States themselves.

Concerning your proposal of a deposit on cigarettes at the point of sale, which is then refunded when the butts (and the packaging) are returned, the Commission is of the opinion that the measures provided for in the SUP Directive as described before are appropriate and proportionate to lead to a significant reduction of the environmental impact caused by post-consumption waste of tobacco products with filters. The introduction of a deposit return scheme for tobacco products is therefore not considered necessary or appropriate to achieve these aims. Rather than proposing new legislation introducing a deposit system, the focus should be on proper implementation of the measures introduced in the SUP Directive for tobacco products with plastic filters.

Yours faithfully,

Electronically signed

Florika FINK-HOOIJER