

Extract A: Cigarette butt recycling scheme aims to stub out waste in Catalonia

In a move that could provide some income for homeless people and clean up the streets, the Catalan government is looking at paying €4 to anyone who hands in a pack's-worth of cigarette ends at a recycling point.

The cost of the proposal would be covered by a 20-cent levy on each cigarette, its proponents say, which would nearly double the price of a pack of Marlboro Red from about €5 (£4.25).

A similar levy on plastic bottles and aluminium cans introduced in New York City in 1982 has provided the homeless with a small but steady income.

"We want to put a stop to the present situation where around 70% of cigarette butts end up either on the ground or in the sea," said Isaac Peraire, the head of the Catalan waste agency.

According to the EU, cigarette butts are the second-most common single-use plastic found on European beaches – and the environmental organisation Ocean Conservancy says that of all the rubbish thrown into the sea, butts are the most numerous.

In an effort to limit marine pollution, smoking will be banned on all of Barcelona's city beaches from July. Spain's coalition government is also planning to overhaul the country's smoking laws to make it illegal to light up on the outside terraces of bars and restaurants, on beaches, and at open-air sports venues.

"The idea isn't to generate income but to reduce the environmental impact of these products," Peraire said. "It's hoped that one day this measure will cease to be necessary because the problem will have disappeared."

Meanwhile, the Spanish government is proposing that cigarette manufacturers should pay the cost of sweeping up butts and should educate the public not to discard them because they contain an environmentally damaging cellulose acetate.

Andrés Zamorano, the president of the National Committee for the Prevention of Tobacco Use, said he was in favour of the measure because "tobacco comes at a high cost, not just from an environmental point of view, but because it pollutes public spaces".

Zamorano conceded, however, that tobacco companies were likely to add the clean-up cost to the price of their products.

There are no precise figures for the cost of cleaning up cigarette ends in Spain. However, a Catalan study estimates the cost at €12-21 each inhabitant a year, with the cost highest in coastal areas.

Adapted from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/20/cigarette-butt-recycling-scheme-aims-to-stub-out-waste-in-catalonia>

Figure 1: Daily smokers of cigarettes 2019

Country	Total percentage of smokers	Total percentage of smokers consuming less than 20 cigarettes per day	Total percentage of smokers consuming more than 20 cigarettes per day
Bulgaria	28.7	15.8	12.9
Greece	23.6	12.8	10.8
Croatia	21.8	10.2	11.6
Cyprus	21.2	11.6	9.7
Spain	19.7	14.8	4.9
Italy	16.5	11.8	4.7
EU average	18.4	12.6	5.9

Source:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HLTH_EHIS_SK3E_custom_1485589/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=0085fd51-e4cc-41ca-818c-4aa94e917bbd

Extract B: US FDA moves to ban menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars

The US Food and Drug Administration on Thursday issued a long-awaited proposal to ban menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars, a major victory for anti-smoking advocates but one that could dent sales at tobacco companies. The proposal, which comes a year after the agency announced the plan, still needs to be finalised, and could take years to implement as it is likely to face stiff opposition from big tobacco.

“The proposed rules would help prevent children from becoming the next generation of smokers and help adult smokers quit,” said the health and human services secretary, Xavier Becerra.

For decades, menthol cigarettes have been in the crosshairs of anti-smoking groups who have argued that they contribute to disproportionate health burdens on Black communities and play a role in luring young people into smoking. Menthol cigarettes, banned in many states including California and Massachusetts, account for more than a third of the industry’s overall market share in the United States, even as overall smoking rates have been declining in the country.

In 2019, there were more than 18.5m menthol cigarette smokers ages 12 and older in the country, with particularly high rates of use by youth, young adults, and African American and other racial and ethnic groups, the agency said.

Adapted from: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/apr/28/us-fda-menthol-cigarettes-flavored-cigars-ban-rules>

Questions

- With reference to extract A, assess the impact of the cigarette butt recycling scheme on the external cost of littering
- With reference to figure 1 and extract B, evaluate the policies available to countries like Bulgaria and Greece when trying to reduce the percentage of the population who smoke