

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Consumer Choice Center, a global consumer advocacy group representing millions of consumers in Europe and globally, I am writing to express our great concern at the proposed ban on all vape flavours. We need policies that are science-based and enhance consumer choice instead of hurting adult consumers and undermining their ability to choose for themselves.

The Netherlands has always been one of the few islands of liberalism, an exemplar of rational openness to innovation. In the Netherlands, [3.1%](#) of adults use e-cigarettes, and with the ban in place, nearly [260,000](#) Dutch vapers might return to smoking. Both short-term and long-term, that is too high of a price to pay, especially in light of our shared European efforts to reduce cancer rates.

In order to see why the proposed vape ban would be a disastrous move that the Dutch government should avoid.

**First, vaping was invented as a harm reduction tool aimed at adult smokers to help them switch to a safer alternative and conversely reduce health-associated risks.**

Vaping has been proven to be 95% less harmful than smoking and has been endorsed by the UK, New Zealand, and Australia government bodies as a safer alternative.

As demonstrated by Public Health England, vaping is 95% less harmful than tobacco cigarettes. Prof. Peter Hajek stated “My reading of the evidence is that smokers who switch to vaping remove almost all the risks smoking poses to their health”. [Prof. McNeill et al., E-cigarettes around 95% less harmful than tobacco estimates landmark review, 2015](#)

- A study by the University of St. Andrews found that vapers are exposed to 0.4% of the lifetime cancer risk of smokers. [Dr. Stephens, “Comparing the cancer potencies of emissions from vaporised nicotine products including e-cigarettes with those of tobacco smoke”, University of St. Andrews, 2017](#)
- As there is no combustion, the amount of toxins that the user is exposed to is significantly reduced and, therefore, the harm is reduced. This was concluded by the Trimbos institute. [Factsheet Elektronische Sigaretten 2020, Trimbos Instituut](#)
- The Cochrane review of studies comprising 12,430 adult e-cigarette users stated that “Scientific consensus holds that electronic cigarettes are considerably less harmful than traditional cigarettes”. [Dr. Hartmann-Boyce et al. Electronic cigarettes for smoking cessation 2020](#)

**Second, allowing smokers to experiment with vape flavours is a key part of cessation through vaping.** Two-thirds of current vapers are using some form of flavoured liquids. Vapers prefer non-tobacco flavours over tobacco flavoured e-cigarettes, mainly because flavours don’t remind them of the taste of cigarettes.

A nationally representative longitudinal study of over 17,000 Americans, over a five year period, showed that adults who used flavoured vaping products were more likely to quit smoking cigarettes when compared to vapers who consumed tobacco flavoured vaping products. When comparing the

two groups, those who use flavours and those who use tobacco flavours, vapers that used flavours were 2.3 times more likely to quit smoking than those vaping tobacco flavoured products.

According to research on vapers in Canada and the U.S, a majority of vapers use non-tobacco flavoured vape products as their personal preference. Consumers generally prefer flavours over tobacco flavoured vaping products because of their taste, but also because tobacco flavours remind consumers of conventional cigarettes. Of those surveyed, who are considered regular users, 63.1% use non-tobacco flavoured products (fruit, mint, candy). These adults found vaping more satisfying (compared with smoking) than vapers using tobacco flavour.

- Because of the importance of vaping as a cessation tool, banning flavours will potentially see over 260,000 Dutch vapers return back to smoking. [Clement, Ossowski, Landl, "Why Vape Flavours Matter", Consumer Choice Centre, 2020.](#)
- A study published by the New England Journal of Medicine showed that vaping is 2 times more successful as a cessation method than nicotine gums and patches. [Dr Hajek, A Randomized Trial of E-Cigarettes versus Nicotine-Replacement Therapy, New England Journal of Medicine 2019](#)
- Flavours also play a key role in this as they make it 2.3 times more likely that a smoker makes the switch from tobacco to e-liquids as a study from Yale makes clear. [Dr. Friedman, Dr. Xu, "Associations of Flavored e-Cigarette Uptake With Subsequent Smoking Initiation and Cessation", Jama Open network](#)
- The Cochrane review of 50 studies on e-cigarettes demonstrated that if six people in 100 quit by using nicotine replacement therapy, 10 people in 100 would quit by using electronic cigarettes containing nicotine. [Dr. Hartmann-Boyce et al. Electronic cigarettes for smoking cessation 2020](#)

In our latest paper [Vaping as a gateway out of smoking](#), we have debunked the most spread myths related to vaping, including youth vaping and nicotine addiction. After reviewing an extensive number of studies on the topic, we at the Consumer Choice Center are of the opinion that banning vape flavours would not only be a violation of consumer choice but, above all, a scientifically ignorant policy. The Dutch government can do better than such proposals and continue a long tradition of freedom on the continent instead of resorting to unjustified paternalism.

Adult smokers should have a choice to switch to a safer alternative that has proved to be an effective cessation tool, and vape flavours are instrumental in making those efforts a success. We need to embrace vaping to reduce health-associated risks such as cancer. For smokers, and for future generations.

Kind regards,

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