

Press release

BfR scientists recommend regulation of tobacco-free nicotine pouches

BVTE welcomes science-based approach to legal regulation

(Berlin, 19 August 2022) A study by scientists from the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) in the journal Tobacco Control confirms that tobacco-free nicotine pouches can be another potentially risk-reducing alternative for smokers in Germany. Based on a study of nicotine content and other health-relevant ingredients in 46 product samples, the scientists recommend appropriate regulation for nicotine pouches, which should include, among other things, an upper nicotine limit, warnings and information on nicotine content on the packaging, as well as requirements for compliance with the protection of minors.

"The BfR study underlines the necessity of a timely and appropriate regulation of nicotine pouches in Germany," said Jan Mücke, Chief Executive of the Federal Association of the Tobacco Industry and Novel Products (BVTE) in Berlin today. At the same time, this confirms the initiative of the BVTE member companies who, in the absence of legal regulations, have already agreed in 2020 to comply with minimum standards for the quality and marketing of tobacco-free nicotine pouches, Mücke continued.

The BVTE product and advertising standards specify, among other things, a nicotine level of no more than 20 mg per pouch, the indication of nicotine content on the packaging, and the use of a health-related warning. In addition, BVTE member companies use only pharmaceutical-grade nicotine in the production process, as well as ingredients of high purity that pose no risk to human health. This is in line with the recommendations of BfR scientists, who had identified substances hazardous to health in individual samples examined.

Tobacco-free nicotine pouches have been wrongly classified as food by some regulatory authorities of the federal states, although they are neither suitable nor intended for ingestion. For this reason, they are currently no longer available in Germany. In Denmark, the Czech Republic, Austria and other EU Member States, these products are available in retail shops. Many consumers order tobacco-free nicotine pouches from foreign online shops, which often do not meet the specifications recommended by the BfR scientists.

"To ensure a high level of consumer protection, policymakers should be guided by the BfR's scientific recommendations and regulate nicotine pouches in tobacco law.

The successful regulation of electronic cigarettes can serve as a template here," said the BVTE CEO.

Tobacco-free nicotine pouches are a stimulant for adult nicotine and/or tobacco users that can potentially reduce health risks compared to smoking tobacco products, especially because no harmful combustion substances are produced. The pouches contain mainly starch, plant fibres, flavours as well as nicotine. The pouch is placed in the mouth under the upper lip. The nicotine is absorbed through the mucous membranes of the mouth. The product is removed from the mouth after use and disposed of.

The Federal Association of the Tobacco Industry and Novel Products (BVTE) represents and promotes the interests of the entire value chain of the smoking, vaping and oral tobacco and nicotine consumption industry across all products.

Reference:

- Mallock N, Schulz T, Malke S, et al.: Levels of nicotine and tobacco-specific nitrosamines in oral nicotine pouches, in: Tobacco Control: <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/tobaccocontrol/early/2022/08/05/tc-2022-057280.full.pdf>
- BVTE-Produkt- und -Werbestandards tabakfreie Nikotinbeutel: https://www.bvte.de/files/content/themen/werbung/BVTE_WS_tabakfr.Nikotinbeutel_0912_2_final.pdf

Contact for queries:

Bundesverband der Tabakwirtschaft und neuartiger Erzeugnisse (BVTE)
Jan Mücke
Hauptgeschäftsführer
Georgenstraße 25
10117 Berlin
Tel. +49 30 88 66 36-123
presse@bvte.de
www.bvte.de