

## Ban on nicotine pouches: A public health mistake by the Minister of Health

**Paris – February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025** - Following the recent statements by Minister of Health Catherine Vautrin, announcing her intention to ban nicotine pouches, comparing them to a "gateway to hard drugs," BAT France wishes to remind that this claim is unsupported and lacks rigorous evidence.

Contrary to the minister's assertions, no scientific study has established that the consumption of nicotine pouches is a factor in promoting addiction to illicit substances, **but rather is a less risky alternative to combustible tobacco consumption.**

*"This misinformation, fuelled by anti-tobacco groups that seem to have lost sight of their original mission, spread fear and misunderstanding about alternative products, ignoring the conclusive facts supported by scientific studies<sup>1</sup>. Let's open the debate to achieve France's objective,"* says Sébastien Charbonneau, Director of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs.

### The Example of Sweden

Sweden and New Zealand are examples to follow for France. **Both countries have significantly reduced their smoking rates** by prioritizing and **encouraging the use of alternative nicotine products**. The results are clear: a smoking rate of 5.4% in Sweden in 2024<sup>2</sup> versus 23.1% in France<sup>3</sup>. Demonizing a reduced-risk product fuels ignorance and the continued prevalence of tobacco, which is responsible for 75,000 annual deaths in France.

### Let's Not Fight the Wrong Battle!

BAT France expresses its concern regarding the consequences of a sudden and ineffective ban on nicotine pouches. Such a measure would be counterproductive, as it would **deprive adult smokers of a less harmful alternative to tobacco**, reducing their choices of nicotine products.

Moreover, **international experience shows that prohibition encourages the development of an illicit market**. In France, a recent study conducted by BAT France and Webdrone<sup>4</sup> revealed the existence of 476 illegal nicotine pouch publications between September 2023 and December 2024. This analysis highlights an already well-established parallel market, mainly on Telegram (58.82%), Snapchat (32.14%), and Facebook Marketplace (6.30%), where products escape any health control. **A complete ban would push many consumers further toward the black market.**

Finally, this ban contradicts the public health goals outlined in the 2023-2027 National Tobacco Control Program (PNLT), which called for the establishment of a regulatory framework for alternative nicotine products. Removing this option would represent a significant setback to the risk-reduction strategy that has been supported so far.

*"It is time for **public policies to follow science, not ideology**,"* continues Sébastien Charbonneau. *"I know that some view the tobacco and nicotine industry's commitment to reducing smoking with scepticism,"* says Mr. Charbonneau. *"Only together can we design solutions to protect minors, help smokers transition to a less harmful solution, and tackle the health harms associated with smoking head-on,"* concludes Sébastien Charbonneau.

<sup>1</sup> [francesanstabac.fr](http://francesanstabac.fr) – onglet Recherches

<sup>2</sup> [Use of tobacco and nicotine products - The Public Health Agency of Sweden](https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/tabac/donnees/#tabs)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/tabac/donnees/#tabs>

<sup>4</sup> [https://revuedestabacs.com/static/media/uploads/etude\\_bat\\_-\\_annee\\_2024.pdf](https://revuedestabacs.com/static/media/uploads/etude_bat_-_annee_2024.pdf)

For more information on fair and effective regulation to achieve a smoke-free France, visit our website - [www.francesanstabac.fr](http://www.francesanstabac.fr)

**END**

## **CONTACT**

**Romain BAYLE**

+33 620 497 554

[romain\\_bayle@bat.com](mailto:romain_bayle@bat.com)

[www.batfrance.com](http://www.batfrance.com)

## **About BAT**

BAT is a leading, multi-category consumer goods business with a purpose to build “A Better Tomorrow” by reducing the health impact of its business through offering a greater choice of enjoyable and less risky products for adult consumers.

The company continues to be clear that combustible cigarettes pose serious health risks, and the only way to avoid these risks is not to start or to quit. BAT encourages those who would otherwise continue to smoke to switch completely to scientifically-substantiated, reduced-risk alternatives\*† .

In order to deliver this, BAT is transforming into a truly consumer centric multicategory consumer products business.

BAT’s ambition is to have 50 million consumers of its non-combustible products by 2030 and to generate £5billion of New Categories revenue by 2025. BAT has set stretching ESG targets including achieving carbon neutrality for Scopes 1 & 2 by 2030 and eliminating unnecessary single-use plastic and making all plastic packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.

BAT employs over 50,000 people and operates in over 180 countries. The BAT Group generated revenue of £27.28 billion in 2023 and profit from operations of £12.46 billion.

The company’s Strategic Portfolio is made up of its global cigarette brands and a growing range of reduced risk\*† New Category tobacco and nicotine products and traditional non-combustible tobacco products. These include vapour, tobacco heating products, modern oral products including tobacco-free nicotine pouches, as well as traditional oral products such as snus and moist snuff. By the end of 2023, we will have 26.4 million consumers of our non-combustible products, an increase of 1.5 million compared with 2022.

\* Based on the weight of evidence and assuming a complete switch from cigarette smoking. These products are not risk free and are addictive. † Our products as sold in the US, including Vuse, Velo, Grizzly, Kodiak, and Camel Snus, are subject to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation and no reduced-risk claims will be made as to these products without FDA clearance.