Disposable electronic cigarettes (known as “Puff bars”) appeared on the European single market in 2021. Unlike traditional vaping products, these devices are non-refillable and disposable.

Cheap and ready for use, Puff bars usually contain nicotine and are designed to appeal to young teenagers. Small enough to fit into a pocket, they are packaged in bright and colorful containers and come in a wide range of sweet and fruity flavors.

1. A popular product despite its health and environmental hazards

- **Health threat and environmental absurdity**

  Puff bars deliver up to 20 mg/mL of nicotine, a level sufficiently high to cause a strong addiction and act as a gateway to tobacco smoking (the French High Council of Public Health considers that the earlier you are exposed to nicotine, the more likely you are to develop a nicotine addiction and smoke cigarettes).

  Moreover, the use of disposable electronic cigarettes increases the risks of developing lungs inflammation and affect the cognitive development of teenagers.

  Puff bars are also a threat to the environment and biodiversity. These plastic disposable devices contain flammable lithium batteries, heavy metals and bear traces of nicotine. They inevitably become non-biodegradable plastic and hazardous waste causing soil, ocean and freshwater pollution, thus necessarily affect wildlife and human health.

- **Growing popularity among the youth in Europe**

  Small, cheap, and ready for use, these colorful disposable electronic cigarettes non only resemble candies but also taste like them, as they are available in a wide range of fruity and sweet flavors. Teenagers and pre-teens clearly are the designated marketing targets of this product, despite the latter’s particularly harmful effects on their health.

  In 2022, the ACT issued a press release revealing that 13% of French teenagers aged between 13 and 16 have already used puff bars. Other European studies have reported a worrying consumption of disposable electronic cigarettes among adolescents. For instance in Belgium, the association FARES published a survey in June 2022, conducted on 249 adolescents, revealing that 65% of them know the existence of puff bars, and among them, 24% use it.
2. Banning disposable electronic cigarettes: a measure endorsed by several Member States of the European Union

- National ongoing requests for a ban across the European Union

Following the publication of its survey, the ACT called for a ban on the sale of disposable electronic cigarettes. Its shocking results and the subsequent call for a ban received considerable media coverage (more than 300 press articles), revealing the public's concern about this issue. A bill for the banning of these devices in France has been introduced and is now endorsed by more than thirty deputies from various political parties.

In Belgium, the FPS Public Health (Belgian federal public service in charge of health and environmental issues) has submitted a request to the European Commission for a ban on single-use electronic cigarettes. It was disapproved by the European Commission, and a new request has been presented in November 2022.

The Irish government has declared its intention to ban disposable electronic cigarettes. To this end, a public consultation on the matter will be held in 2023. This initiative seems to be motivated by environmental concerns.

In Germany, in response to a parliamentary question, the government has raised the possibility of a strict ban on disposable electronic cigarettes, based on a legislation regarding the eco-design of products. Furthermore, the Bavarian government has asked the German federal government to ban the sale of Puff bars in Germany and in the European Union.

- Some member states have already regulated to indirectly limit access to Puff bars

Several member states have already prohibited flavored electronic cigarette liquids, concerned about their attractiveness to teenagers. A ban on these flavors severely restricts the marketing of Puff bars.

This is the case in Finland, Estonia, Hungary, and soon in Denmark, the Netherlands and Lithuania (see the European Commission's study on this subject on the application of Tobacco Products Directive, p. 123).

Considering the serious threat this product represents to public health and the environment, and in the continuity of the initiatives already undertaken by several Member States, it is now urgent that the European Union prohibits its sale.

The Puff bars phenomenon is an eminently European issue: legally available in a large number of European Union countries, many of them have noticed an increasing consumption of this product among their youth, are concerned about its impact on health and the environment and are eager to ban it.

As an electronic cigarette, this device is currently legal in the European Union and regulated by the European Directive on Tobacco Products (2014/40/EU). However, this product characteristics contradict the European Union objectives, both in terms of public health (for instance, the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan) and sustainable development (notably the European Green Deal).

This measure could be introduced through the revision of the European Directive on Tobacco Products. As pointed by the European Commission itself, it could also be implemented as part of the revision of the European directive on single-use plastics ((EU) 2019/904) or that on batteries.
ACT-Alliance contre la Tabac: who are we?

ACT-Alliance contre le Tabac is a group of associations committed to public health and general interest. ACT has been working for nearly thirty years to defend the well-being of all against the interests of the tobacco industry.

As a representative of its member associations, ACT is determined to expose the manipulations of this industry and influence the public debate for a more sustainable future.

ACT’s commitment to the fight against tobacco has led to significant public health gains in France. Through information and advocacy campaigns, ACT continues to fight against the tobacco industry who are redoubling their efforts to normalize the consumption of its addictive products in various forms.

Through its unifying action, ACT mobilizes decision-makers, public health, environmental, human rights, and financial stakeholders, as well as the media, to see the emergence in 2030 of the first generation in France to be free of the harmful effects of tobacco and its industry.

www.alliancecontreletabac.org