



International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease

Health solutions for the poor

PRESS RELEASE

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Ministerial delegations from Russia and China visit Scotland to observe implementation of progressive tobacco control policies

Edinburgh, 03.03.14 – A delegation of ministerial public health officials from Russia and China will observe Scotland's progressive tobacco control laws in action during a three-day visit to the capital, beginning today 3 March.

Members of Scottish Government and academics at the University of Edinburgh will share their knowledge of tobacco control policy development and implementation, and healthcare providers, retailers and non-governmental organisations will demonstrate how laws are working on the ground. The delegates' governments are both currently developing tobacco control legislation to promote public health.

The visit is being hosted by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), whose Europe Region Office and Department for Tobacco Control are based in Edinburgh. The Union works in 125 countries across the globe, including Russia and China, and offers technical support to develop and implement tobacco control policy as a key part of its work.

Dr Ehsan Latif, Director of Tobacco Control at The Union said: 'The tobacco epidemic is a global issue. It is the number one cause of preventable disease and untimely death. Tobacco control policy is vital because it prevents suffering and poverty, and Scotland offers a great example of how progressive policy can become reality – and save lives.'

'Tobacco control is at a pivotal stage in both Russia and China,' he added, 'The Union has offices in both countries which offer technical assistance for this key sector of public health. The aim of this visit is to bring people together to share practical knowledge, and discuss how potential challenges can be overcome. E-cigarettes and plain packaging for tobacco products, as well as tobacco industry interference, are all on the agenda.'

Scotland began implementing the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) soon after it came into force in 2005. Resulting legislation, including the smokefree law (2006), and an increase in the age for tobacco sales from 16 to 18 (2007), is yielding considerable results. The number of smokers has declined from 31% in 1999 to 23.3% in 2011. But tobacco use remains one of the country's biggest health challenges – it is associated with 13,000, or one quarter of all deaths in Scotland every year.

Michael Matheson, Minister for Public Health said: 'Smoking is a public health blight across the globe, and I am pleased that the Scottish Government has worked with The Union on this visit. I look forward to sharing our experiences of tobacco control.'

Professors specialising in public health at Edinburgh University will also welcome the international delegation and will hold an open discussion with the guests on tobacco control progress and challenges. The university has played a key role in informing Scotland's tobacco control policy.

The Union, supported by the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use, currently offers technical in 46 low- and middle-income countries.

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About The Union

The mission of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is to bring innovation, expertise, solutions and support to address health challenges in low- and middle-income populations. With nearly 15,000 members and subscribers from 150 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and offices serving the Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia regions. Its scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and research. Learn more at

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