

## Europeans favour ban on smoking in public

An overwhelming majority of Europeans are in favour of a ban on smoking in workplaces and indoor public places, new data showed Tuesday.

Some 88 percent of citizens in the European Union want smoke free offices, restaurants and other indoor spaces, said a study by the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm.

EU health chief Markos Kyprianou said the broad support for anti-tobacco policies could help make European public and work places smoke-free by 2009.

While one in three smokers has tried to quit in the last 12 months, more than 70 percent of them relapsed into the habit in less than two months with most smokers citing stress as the main reason.

The commission earlier this year urged member states to prohibit smoking in public places but insisted that an EU-wide ban would be the most effective way to fight tobacco-related deaths and diseases.

Tobacco is the single largest cause of avoidable death in the bloc, accounting for some 650,000 deaths every year in the EU and more than a million in [Europe](#) as a whole.

Passive smoking kills 80,000 people each year.

Smoking-related diseases cost EU countries up to 130 billion euros (\$168 billion) each year, or up to 1.4 percent of GDP.

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