

France moves to ban 'sneaky' disposable e-cigarettes

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French parliament has backed a proposal to ban single-use electronic cigarettes, considered to be gateways to tobacco addiction for teenagers and harmful to the environment.

The lower house National Assembly late Monday voted unanimously for the move, which still needs backing from France's upper house Senate and clearance from the EU Commission.

Pre-filled disposable e-cigarettes, known as "puffs", are popular with [young people](#), can have a high nicotine content, come in many flavors and are cheap.

"They open a pathway to serious addiction," Health Minister Aurelien Rousseau said.

"They're ridiculously cheap, the fruity and sugary flavors are attractive, and their [small size](#) makes them easy to hide from parents," said deputy Francesca Pasquini, who submitted the draft law in November last year.

Co-sponsor Michel Lauzzana said that France's National Academy of Medicine qualifies puffs as "a sneaky trap especially for children and teenagers".

The motion, which got the [vote](#) of all the 104 members of parliament present, has the backing of Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, who had in September called for a ban on the [single-use](#) vaping devices.

The vote for the bill was unanimous, although far-left lawmaker Rachel Keke called on the government to "set an example", a remark seen as aimed at Borne who is often seen vaping during parliamentary debates.

'Environmental calamity'

The members of parliament also deplored the ecological impact of the disposable e-cigarettes, which Rousseau called an "environmental calamity".

Pasquini said they had a high content of plastic and lithium which required great amounts of oil and water for their production which were extracted "across the world in lamentable conditions".

The measure, part of a wider government anti-smoking campaign, will now go to the Senate for approval.

It then needs the [green light](#) from the EU Commission which will notably rule on whether a ban would be a "proportionate" response to the problem.

If that process goes smoothly, the government said it hopes the ban will be effective by September 2024.

The French move against puffs, introduced in France two years ago, follows similar initiatives in Germany and Ireland.

Tobacco use is the main cause of 75,000 avoidable deaths every year in France, said deputy Karl Olive.

"These are not just statistics," he said. "They are first names, lives, families destroyed and in mourning."

The move against vaping is part of a wider French anti-smoking campaign.

The government said last month it would ban smoking on all the country's beaches, in public parks and forests, and near schools.

Taxes on cigarettes are to be hiked, with a pack of 20, currently at around 11 euros (\$12), rising to 12 euros by 2025 and 13 euros the following year.

The [government](#) aims to create "the first tobacco-free generation by 2032", according to a promise made by President Emmanuel Macron in 2021.

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