

WHO blames 4 major industries for 2.7 mn deaths a year in Europe

June 12 2024



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

The WHO on Wednesday blamed four major industries—tobacco, ultra-processed foods (UPFs), fossil fuel and alcohol—for 2.7 million deaths a year in Europe, accusing them of obstructing public policies that could

hurt their profits.

These "four industries kill at least 7,000 people in our region every day," Hans Kluge, the director of the World Health Organization Europe region which counts 53 countries including Central Asia, said in a statement.

The consolidation of these industry sectors into a small number of multinationals "has enabled them to wield significant power over the political and legal contexts in which they operate, and to obstruct public interest regulations which could impact their [profit margins](#)," the WHO said as it released a report.

Industry tactics included exploiting [vulnerable people](#) through targeted [marketing strategies](#), misleading consumers, and making false claims about the benefits of their products or their environmental credentials, it argued.

"These tactics threaten public health gains of the past century and prevent countries from reaching their health targets," it added.

Industry lobbying was hampering efforts to tackle non-communicable illnesses such as [cardiovascular disease](#), cancer and diabetes, said the WHO.

Almost 60 percent of adults and a third of children in Europe are overweight or obese, according to the WHO.

The most recent data, from 2017, showed that one death in five attributed to cardiovascular disease and cancer in Europe was the result of unhealthy eating habits.

The WHO urged countries to fight back by enforcing stronger

regulations on the marketing of unhealthy products, monopolistic practices and lobbying.

"People must take precedence before profit, always," Kluge said.

The report, "Commercial determinants of noncommunicable diseases in the WHO European Region", is available at the WHO website.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: WHO blames 4 major industries for 2.7 mn deaths a year in Europe (2024, June 12) retrieved 20 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-06-blames-major-industries-mn-deaths.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.