



**The EUREST-PLUS Project: Collaboration between the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (ITC Project) and Researchers in 6 European Countries**

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Workshop on Canadian-EU Research Partnerships  
McMaster University, University of Waterloo, Western University  
Wednesday, February 3, 2021 – 1020-1040 EST



# The Global Tobacco Epidemic

“Tobacco is the most effective agent of death ever developed and deployed on a worldwide scale.”

– John Seffrin, Past President,  
American Cancer Society

- Over 1 billion tobacco users in the world
- Current annual death toll: 7.1M deaths from smoking  
1.2M deaths from secondhand smoke
- 20th century: 100M deaths → 21st century: well over 500M deaths
- Burden is shifting to Low- and Middle-Income Countries
- NOT just a health problem. Total economic cost of smoking = US\$1.4 trillion, equal to 1.8% of global GDP

# WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control



- First-ever WHO treaty: adopted May 2003, came into force Feb 2005
- Rapidly growing treaty: 181 countries and the EU are parties
- Obligates Parties to implement strong measures to combat tobacco use
  - Large graphic warnings, comprehensive smoke-free laws, bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship, high tobacco taxes, support for cessation, protection of youth, measures to combat illicit trade, protection of environment, alternative livelihoods
  - Article 5.3: measures to ban tobacco companies from influencing tobacco policies and regulations

**May be the greatest disease prevention initiative in history**

# The FCTC and scientific evidence



*“The FCTC is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health.”*

*– FCTC Foreword*

...and evaluating FCTC policies provides critical evidence to support stronger and swifter implementation.

# The International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (the ITC Project)



Canada



United States



Australia



United Kingdom



Greece



Ireland



Thailand



Malaysia



Republic of Korea



Hungary



China



Uruguay



Mexico



New Zealand



Poland



France



Germany



Netherlands



Bangladesh



Romania



Brazil



Mauritius



Bhutan



India



Spain



Zambia



Kenya



Abu Dhabi



Japan

- Created in 2002 (prior to the creation of the FCTC)
- 29 countries, covering >half of the world's population and >2/3 of the world's tobacco users
- 9 European countries
- Extensive cohort surveys to evaluate FCTC policies
- Recent focus on impact of e-cigarettes and newer heated tobacco products
- 630+ scientific articles, 1300+ scientific papers, over 90 research grants from 21 countries, but mostly CIHR and US NIH: total funding > \$100M CAD

# ITC Project: 2012 meeting in Singapore



65 of our 100+ investigators and staff from 17 ITC countries

# ITC Project is a global project...



**China**



**Zambia**



**Kenya**



**Bhutan**



**Framework Convention Alliance at the  
FCTC Conference of the Parties**

# Examples of ITC Findings

- Health warnings: graphic images and increasing size increases their effectiveness
  - ITC evaluation studies in AU, NZ, TH, MY, MU, UY, BR, MX
  - ITC evaluation of UY's size increase: key evidence defeating an industry challenge via a trade treaty
- Comprehensive smoke-free laws dramatically reduce secondhand smoke
  - ITC evaluation of Ireland, the first country to implement a comprehensive law
  - ITC evidence contributed to many countries implementing similar laws in the EU and in other regions.
- Higher taxes significantly reduce smoking, BUT tax structure really matters
  - ITC studies across 14 countries shows that specific uniform taxes are much more efficient and effective in driving down smoking rates than tiered taxes. ITC data used to support Kenya's President Kenyatta's successful defense against the industry of maintaining uniform specific taxes.
- Plain packaging leads to significantly lower appeal of cigarettes and increase in the salience of health warnings
  - Key ITC studies in AU, NZ, EN, CA, plus expert testimony defending AU at the WTO.



# ITC Collaborations with EU countries before 2015



## **UK/England:** 12 survey waves: 2002 to 2020

- Funding from CIHR, US NIH/NCI, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Cancer Research UK

## **Ireland:** 4 survey waves: 2003-04, 2004-05, 2006, 2007

- Funding from US NIH/NCI, Flight Attendants' Medical Research Institute, Research Institute for a Tobacco-Free Society, Dublin

## **France:** 3 survey waves: 2006-07, 2008, 2012. New survey started: 2020

- Funding from CIHR, Santé publique France, Institut National du Cancer (INCa), Institut National de Prévention et d'Éducation pour la Santé (INPES), Observatoire français des drogues et toxicomanies (OFDT),

## **Germany:** 3 survey waves: 2007, 2009, 2012

- Funding from the German Federal Ministry of Health, Dieter Mennekes-Umweltstiftung, and Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DKFZ)

## **Netherlands:** 14 survey waves, 2008 to 2020

- Funding from CIHR and from several Dutch sources (current: Dutch Lung Foundation)

# A new opportunity for EU collaboration arises...

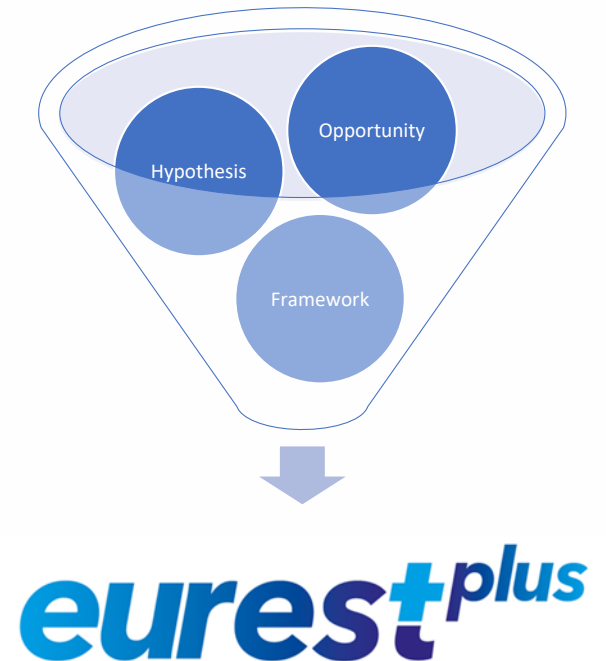


## The window of opportunity

- Efforts to reduce the devastation of tobacco-related deaths and illness include, the TPD and FCTC.
- These two instruments provide the EU Member States with the framework of actions.
- Implementation of TPD - unique window of opportunity to be able to evaluate this large natural experiment.

# Why European Funding?

- ✓ Impossible to do such large scaled research in Europe with any other funding mechanism
- ✓ European focused project – but international expertise needed
- ✓ Large amount of funding was needed
- ✓ Prestige / scientific trust in the process
- ✓ Career development path development



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 681109

# eurest<sup>plus</sup>

- European Regulatory Science on Tobacco: Policy implementation to reduce lung diseases (EUREST-PLUS)
- Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) call – Lung Diseases
- Highly technical proposal –selection of the final 13 partners (Budget, geography, tobacco epidemic)
- Coordinated by ENSP – mixing Academia, with NGO – EU and non-EU participants

 European Network on Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP)

 Kings College London (KCL)

 German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ)

 University of Maastricht (UniMaas)

 National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (UoA)

 Aer Pur Romania (APR)

 European Respiratory Society (ERS)

 University of Waterloo (UW)

 International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project

 Institut Català d'Oncologia (ICO)

 Smoking or Health Hungarian Foundation (SHHF)

 Health Promotion Foundation (HPF)

 University of Crete (UoC)

 Kantar Public Brussels



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# Overall Aim

To monitor and evaluate the impact of the TPD, within the context of FCTC ratification at a European level.



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# EUREST-PLUS ITC cohort study

- ITC 6 European Country Surveys
  - *Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Spain*
- Prospective longitudinal cohort study of adult smokers, pre-post TPD design
  - Wave 1 (pre-TPD): June-September 2016 (N = 6011)
  - Wave 2 (post-TPD): February-May 2018 (N = 6027)
    - Includes both Wave 1 respondents who were successfully followed up at Wave 2 + new (replenishment respondents).
- Additional comparisons with other ITC countries in the EU (UK & Netherlands) **and** ITC countries outside EU (including Canada)



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# eurest<sup>plus</sup>

- Proposal is competitively assessed and funded!
- Showcased as a “success story” in the Horizon2020 Info day.
- Excellent science – with significant policy implications  
BUT we are told that there is no funding for non-EU partners!
- We are funded – but unable to perform the research!
- EU removes ITC Canadian budget: from €2.79M to €2.33M
- BUT EU requires that the remaining EUREST-PLUS team must perform all of ITC’s work (AND w/o the budget). Impossible: ITC Project’s methods and EU-wide and global data set are unique and essential.
- In contrast: the Swiss component is funded by the Swiss government: Switzerland automatically funds Swiss researchers who are a part of EU-funded projects.
- **The entire EUREST-PLUS Project is jeopardized. How can Canada be funded?**



*This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 681109*

# The UW Office of Research saves the day!!



- The UW Office of Research agrees to provide direct funding to the ITC Project to fulfill the required and approved scientific work for the EUREST-PLUS Project. €460K = \$690K (Jan 2016)
- Leads to a landmark research project, involving with major contributions to both science and policy.
- Scientific contributions:
  - 65+ scientific journal articles, including 2 journal supplements *Tobacco Induced Diseases* (Wave 1 of the ITC 6 European Country Survey), and at *European Journal of Public Health* (Wave 2, plus some longitudinal analyses)
  - Over 100 papers presented at scientific meetings



# EUREST-PLUS Project: Evidence → policy



The European Respiratory Society (ERS) and the European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP) are pleased to invite you to an event at the European Parliament

## H2020 FUNDING FOR TOBACCO CONTROL. SCALING UP FOR THE PREVENTION OF LUNG DISEASES IN THE EU

Thursday 18th October 2018, 12:00-14:45

Hosted by **Gilles Pargneaux**, MEP

Chair: **Constantine Vardavas**

European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium, Room Mário Soares

Lunch will be provided

e-mail: [scientific@ersnet.org](mailto:scientific@ersnet.org)



This event takes place with the financial support of the European Commission (Horizon2020 HCO-6-2015; EUREST-PLUS: 681109)








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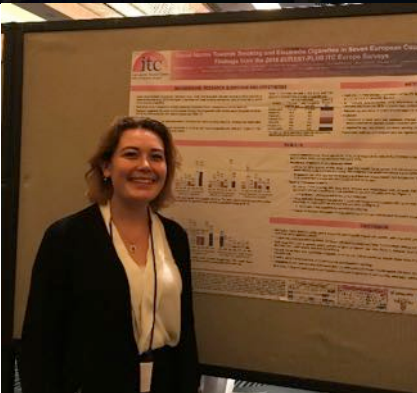


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HEALTH

# Are there passive smoking risks from e-cigarettes?



# EUREST-PLUS: Evidence to shape FUTURE policies



- The Tobacco Products Directive required a post-implementation review (PIR). That PIR is currently being conducted.
- EUREST-PLUS: the only pre-post evaluation of the TPD.
- EUREST-PLUS/ITC evidence shows the importance of:
  - Plain packaging of tobacco products
  - Graphic warning labels
  - Banning of flavours including menthol
  - Requirements for e-cigarettes
- Evidence from EUREST-PLUS/ITC Project is shaping the next round of tobacco regulations, AND is providing feedback to Member States on the impact of their TPD implementations in comparison with other MS.





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Tobacco Products Directive and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

EUREST-PLUS Overview

EUREST-PLUS E-Cigarettes

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## European Regulatory Science on Tobacco: Policy implementation to reduce lung diseases (EUREST-PLUS)

Written by Constantine Vardavas on 15 October 2018 in Opinion Plus

Outcomes of the H2020 EUREST-PLUS project will be presented on October 18, 2018 at the European Parliament in Brussels



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 681109

# H2020 funding for respiratory research: scaling up for the prevention and treatment of lung diseases



EUROPEAN RESPIRATORY *journal*

FLAGSHIP SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL OF ERS

Constantine I. Vardavas<sup>1,2</sup>, Christina N. Kyriakos <sup>1,2</sup>, Esteve Fernández <sup>3</sup>, Panagiotis Bamidis<sup>4</sup>, Kamran Siddiqi <sup>5,6</sup>, Niels H. Chavannes<sup>7</sup>, R.M.J.J. van der Kleij<sup>7</sup>, Gary Parker<sup>8</sup>, Cornel Radu-Loghin<sup>2</sup>, Brian Ward<sup>9</sup> and Karim Berkouk<sup>10</sup>

## BOX 1 Key messages for the prevention and treatment of lung diseases

- 1) Monitor and maximise effective regulation of tobacco products
  - 2) Strengthen smoke-free regulations and increase awareness about the risks of second-hand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol exposure
  - 3) Integrate smoking cessation into TB treatment programmes to address the dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases in respiratory health
  - 4) Implement mass-media educational campaigns and engage healthcare professionals in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of chronic lung diseases
  - 5) Utilise multidisciplinary tools such as m-Health and neurofeedback for smoking cessation interventions
- 



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# Advances in support for Canada-EU collaborations



- In 2015, there was no mechanism for Canadian researchers to be supported for Horizon 2020 Projects.
- Since that time, there has been a mechanism put in place via New Frontiers Research Fund (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR)
  - \$275M over 5 years (2018-19 to 2022-23) including \$65M “to fund international, interdisciplinary, fast-breaking and high-risk research.”
  - In 2020, this included \$10M over 4 years to support Canadian researchers involved in Horizon 2020 research projects.

# What are the obstacles and challenges for our Canadian-EU research collaboration?



## 1. Timing and coordination of NFRF application with H2020 application

- Registration deadline = 2 wks > H2020 application is submitted
- Application deadline = 1 month > (favourable) review of application

### Implications:

- EU researchers may not want to add Canadian researchers to their application with no assurance that the work would be supported.
- Reviewers of an application cannot confidently evaluate Canadian components (e.g., entire WPs) since there is no assured funding
- There may be a **disincentive** for EU research teams to include Canadian researchers. Instead, they may opt for EU researchers that could provide the same contributions with assurances of funding.

**Andy Hrymak: need for alignment of timing of Canada & EU decisions**

# What are the obstacles and challenges for our Canadian-EU research collaboration?

- 1. Is it possible to establish DIRECT EU funding for Canadian researchers?**
- 2. If not, there should be assured funding for Canadian researchers included on approved EU applications. EU research teams developing applications would thus have incentive to include Canadian researchers.**

# What are the obstacles and challenges for our Canadian-EU research collaboration?



## 2. NFRF 2020 Horizon Global Platform competition: Fit to program

- Selected research calls that fit “within one of the seven focus challenges under the Societal Challenges pillar of Horizon 2020.”

### Implications:

- A limitation imposed so that not all Horizon 2020 calls were included
- But all Horizon 2020 calls were (presumably) developed and issued to fit within one of the seven focus challenges under the Societal Challenges pillar of Horizon 2020.

**NFRF funding should be available for ALL successful Horizon Europe projects involving Canadian researchers**

# Summary



- ITC Project collaboration in Europe: good example of a research collaboration between Canadian and EU researchers. a highly productive research program that has advanced both the science and policy to combat the number one preventable cause of death in the EU and the world.
- Major obstacles to this collaboration. The EUREST-PLUS collaboration would never have happened without direct funding from UW.
- Looking forward: need to create better mechanisms and support for Canada-EU research collaboration. There must be strategic alignment of funding decisions in Canada vis-à-vis EU to create incentives for EU researchers to partner with Canadian researchers: funding **MUST** be assured prior to the EU application.
- **Critically important for Canada to become an Associate member**
- **If not, Canada should guarantee funding for Canadian researchers who are part of a successful Horizon Europe research project.**

# Major Support for the ITC Project



**US National Cancer Institute: P01 CA200512**



**Canadian Institutes of Health Research: FDN-148477**



**Ontario Institute for Cancer Research Senior Investigator Award (2007-2022)**



**University of Waterloo Office of Research**

