European companies warn Spain’s vape flavour ban puts investment at risk and could fuel illicit trade

Wednesday 25 November, 2026

Brussels, 25 November 2026 - The Independent European Vape Alliance (IEVA), which represents vaping associations and companies across Europe, has warned that Spain’s decision to restrict e-liquid flavours to tobacco could drive consumers towards the illicit market, reduce the options available to adults looking to switch away from cigarettes and put specialist retailers and manufacturers at risk.

The Spanish government approved the amendment to Royal Decree 579/2017 on 24 November. European vaping companies estimate that the decision could jeopardise more than €100 million in potential investment in Spain through 2028. Companies may redirect that investment to other European markets.

The ban could also affect Spain’s vaping tax revenue. The tax has raised around €60 million so far in 2026. Spain’s vaping trade association, the Unión de Promotores y Empresarios del Vapeo (UPEV), estimates that illicit products already account for 40% of vaping products sold in Spain.[1] IEVA warns that further growth in illicit sales would make Spain a less attractive market for businesses operating legally.

Dustin Dahlmann, President of IEVA, said:

“Spain’s government is putting public health at risk with a deeply misguided policy. Banning flavours in the regulated market won’t make demand disappear. It will drive more customers towards illegal sellers, where age checks and product safety standards are far harder to enforce. The government is handing those sellers a bigger market while taking away options that help adults move away from cigarettes. That’s how you undermine the very youth and consumer protections this ban claims to strengthen.”

IEVA supports the call of the Spanish industry represented through the Union de Empresarios del Vapeo (UPEV) for effective age verification and stronger enforcement against illegal sales.

IEVA calls on the Spanish government to publish the final text of the decree, clarify when the restrictions will apply and explain how it assessed the impact on adult consumers, small businesses and the illicit market.

Sources:

[1] UPEV press release 25.11.2026 Link

About IEVA

The Independent European Vape Alliance (IEVA) is the only pan-European association aimed at uniting national associations, companies, manufacturers and wholesalers in the vaping industry and providing them with responsible representation at the European level. IEVA’s founding principle is to contribute to harm reduction and public health. E-cigarettes have a significant positive impact and should be recognized as a harm reduction tool because vaping is not smoking.

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