

Distribution of tobacco products, new tobacco products and herbal smoking products in Bulgaria

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Abstract

According to Directive 2014/40/EU manufacturers and importers of tobacco products, e-cigarettes and herbal smoking products must provide information on their composition, emissions, toxicological data on ingredients, in-depth studies on certain additives and market data on annual sales, to the competent authorities. The declaration is implemented through the common portal EU Common Entry Portal EC (EU-CEG), established by the European Commission and operational since May 2016. The EU-CEG portal for Bulgaria consists of two sectors - Tobacco Products (Tobacco sector), served by the Tobacco and Tobacco Products Institute, Markovo and E-cigarettes Sector and served by the Ministry of Economy. The Tobacco Products sector includes the following categories of products - cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobaccos, roll-your-own tobacco, snuff, waterpipe tobaccos, new tobacco products, herbal products for smoking. Until December 31, 2021, the EU-CEG portal for Bulgaria has 2 928 registrations for tobacco, tobacco products and herbal smoking products, divided into 10 different categories. The highest number of registrations was reported in cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobaccos, representing 91% of all registrations. The number of registered tobacco products for waterpipe tobacco until 31. 12. 2021 is 514 and is approaching the number of cigarettes. There is a significant increase in the registrations of herbal smoking products and the new tobacco products.

Key words: tobacco products; new tobacco products; herbal smoking products; distribution; Bulgaria

INTRODUCTION

The control over the production, qualification, purchase and industrial processing of tobacco, as well as the production and control of tobacco and new tobacco products in Bulgaria is carried out through the Law on Tobacco, Tobacco and Related Products (Law on Tobacco, Tobacco and Related Products, 2016).

Bulgaria, as an EU member state, is obliged to comply with the requirements of Directive 2014/40/EU (TPD). TPD requires by manufacturers and importers in the EU country for declaration of all tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and herbal products to the competent authorities of the country. Information on their composition, emissions,

toxicological data on ingredients, in-depth studies on certain additives and market data on annual sales must be provided (Directive 2014/40/EU, 2014).

The products described in the TPD and to be reported are classified in the following categories:

✓ Tobacco products - According to Art. 2 of the TPD, tobacco products means products that can be consumed and consist, even partly, of tobacco, whether genetically modified or not. This category includes cigarette, cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco, snuff, waterpipe tobacco, new tobacco products.

✓ Products related to tobacco products, which are divided into two subcategories:

- Electronic cigarettes – means a product that can be used for consumption of nicotine-containing

vapour via a mouth piece, or any component of that product, including a cartridge, a tank and the device without cartridge or tank. Electronic cigarettes can be disposable or refillable by means of a refill container and a tank, or rechargeable with single use cartridges; Containers, additional liquids that contain nicotine can be used to charge an electronic device.

- Herbal smoking products other than tobacco
- products based on plants, herbs or fruits. It does not contain tobacco and can be used by combustion process (Directive 2014/40/EU, 2014).

Manufacturers and importers of the listed products provide the necessary information in the EU Common Entry Portal EC (EU-CEG), set up by the European Commission and running since May 2016. Member State has its own database of product information which is intended for the market within its borders. Initially, the information in the EU-CEG system is strictly confidential. Gradually, some of the data in the system is now freely available (https://ec.europa.eu/health/eu-common-entry-gate-eu-ceg/providing-information-tobacco-products-e-cigarettes-and-refill-containers-eu-common-entry-gate-eu_en#about-eu-ceg).

The aim of this study is to follow the spread of tobacco, tobacco products, new tobacco products and herbal smoking products in Bulgaria.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The EU-CEG portal for Bulgaria consists of two sections:

1. Tobacco products (Tobacco sector) - served by the Tobacco and Tobacco Products Institute, Markovo, and includes the following categories of products - cigarette, cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco, snuff, waterpipe tobacco, new tobacco products, herbal products for smoking (<http://www.ttpi-bg.com/bg/EUCEG/BG-Tobacco-2022-01-16publ.pdf>).

2. Electronic cigarettes - serviced by the Ministry of Economy.

Unauthorized information is created and XML - creator is used. The mode of transmission of information is through xml files (for structural information) or pdf files (for additional information in open format), which are built from the EU-CEG portal or are specified direct references from the interface.

XML - creator for tobacco products contains 13 sections with 152 fields to fill. The way in which information is entered into the EU - CEG portal by economic operators is through closed fields, which must be filled with values, accepted from the field itself in order to standardize this information. Other sections allow or oblige to add information without a specific format, which allows the economic operator to expand or complete the reported information.

The EU-CEG portal offers different ways to search and process information. To summarize the results, statistical processing of the results is done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the number of registrations of tobacco and herbal products for smoking from 2016 to 31. 12. 2021. The total number of registrations from May 2016, when the EU-CEG system started operating, to the end of December 2021 is 2928. The largest number of registrations was reported in 2016 (644) and 2020 (578), and the smallest - in 2018 (306). It is noteworthy that after the first registration of the portal in the Tobacco sector for tobacco and plant products by the end of December 2021, the total number of registrations has increased by 163%.

Figure 2 presents data on the number of registrations per 100 000 population for tobacco, tobacco products and herbal products for smoking in the Tobacco sector in Bulgaria, France, Spain, Lithuania and Estonia.

The highest number of registrations per 100,000 populations was reported in Estonia (205.55) and Lithuania (61.54), and the lowest in France (10.07) and in Spain (14.81). The number of registrations per 100,000 population in Bulgaria is 41.8. It is 2.8 times higher than that in Spain, 4.1 times higher than that in France and 4.9 times smaller than that of Estonia (Rebollar et al., 2019, <https://www.anses.fr/en/content/tobacco-and-related-products>, <https://ntakd.lrv.lt › ntakd › files › EU-CEG › tabakas>, <https://www.terviseamet.ee/et/kemikaaliohutus-tooteohutus/toodete-kaitlejale/tubakatooted/tubakatooted-teavitamine>).

Cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobaccos represent for 91% of all registrations. The largest number of registrations in the EU-CEG portal for Bulgaria from May 2016 to the end of 2021 are cigars (1384) and cigarettes (617), followed by

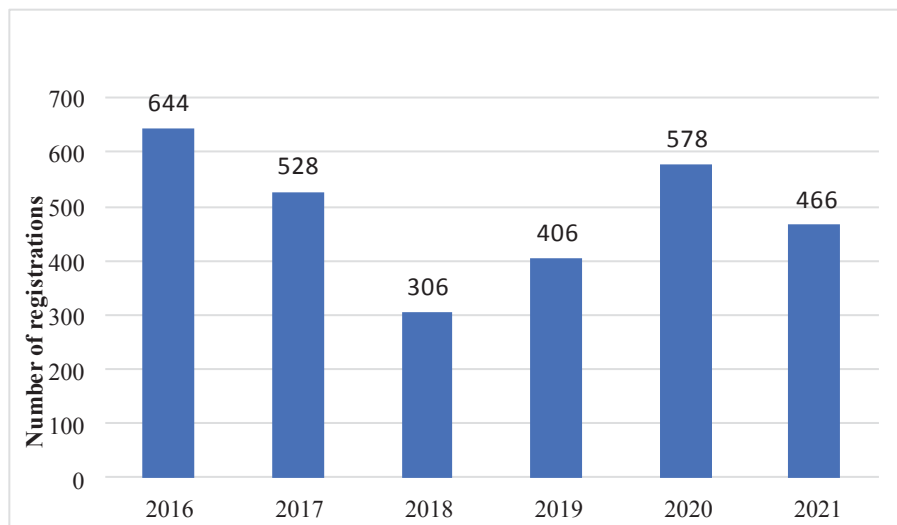


Figure 1. Number of registrations of tobacco, tobacco products and herbal products for smoking in Bulgaria in Tobacco sector

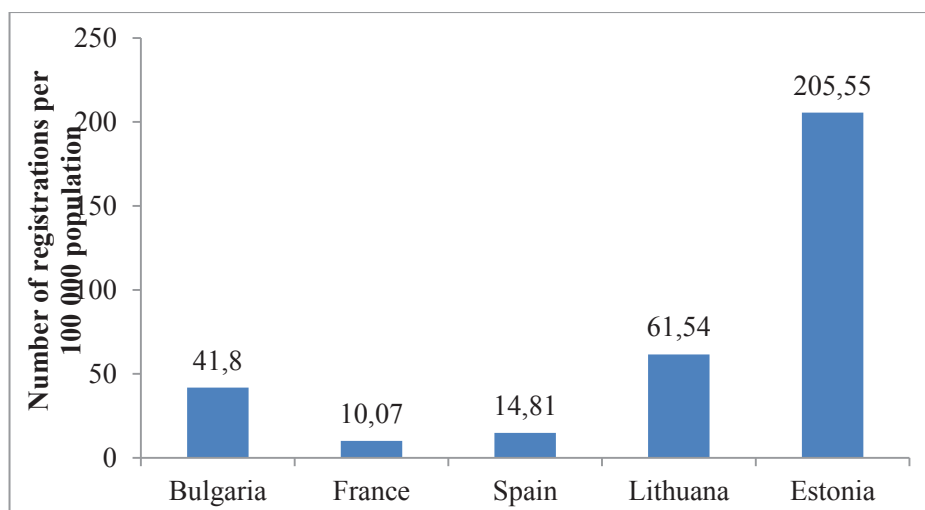


Figure 2. Number of registrations per 100 000 population for tobacco, tobacco products and herbal products for smoking in the Tobacco sector in Bulgaria, France, Spain, Lithuania and Estonia

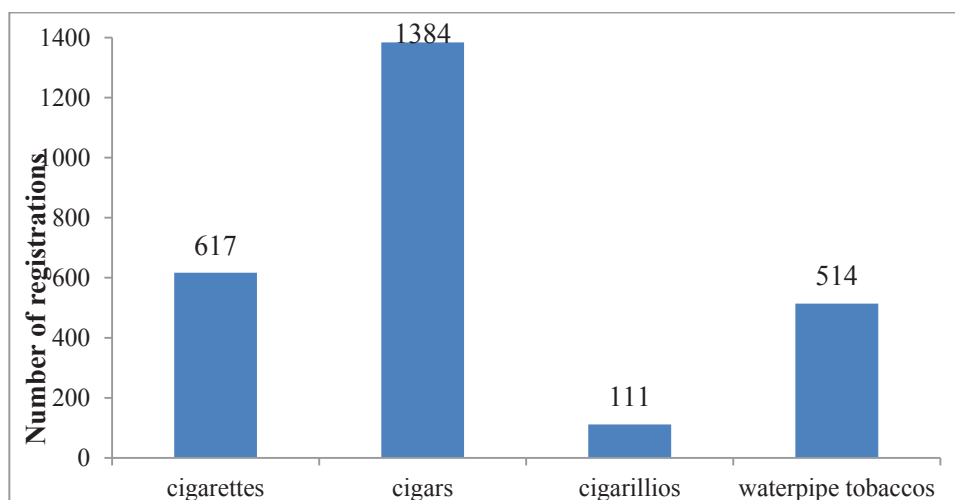


Figure 3. Number of registrations of cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobaccos in Bulgaria in Tobacco sector

waterpipe tobaccos (514) and cigarillos (111) - Figure 3.

In Figure 4 presents the number of registrations by categories of cigarettes, waterpipe tobaccos and new tobacco products in the EU-CEG portal in Bulgaria by years - from 2016 to the end of December 2021. The total number of registered cigarettes from the beginning of 2016 to the end on December 2021 is 583. It can be seen that gradually over the

years the number of registered cigarettes remains relatively constant - from 108 in 2016 to 73 in 2021. The number of registered for waterpipe tobaccos show a significant increase. From 1 registered waterpipe tobacco in 2016 the number of registrations increased to 191 in 2021. The total number of registrations for waterpipe tobaccos from 2016 to the end of 2021 is 514 and approaches the number of cigarettes - Figure 4.

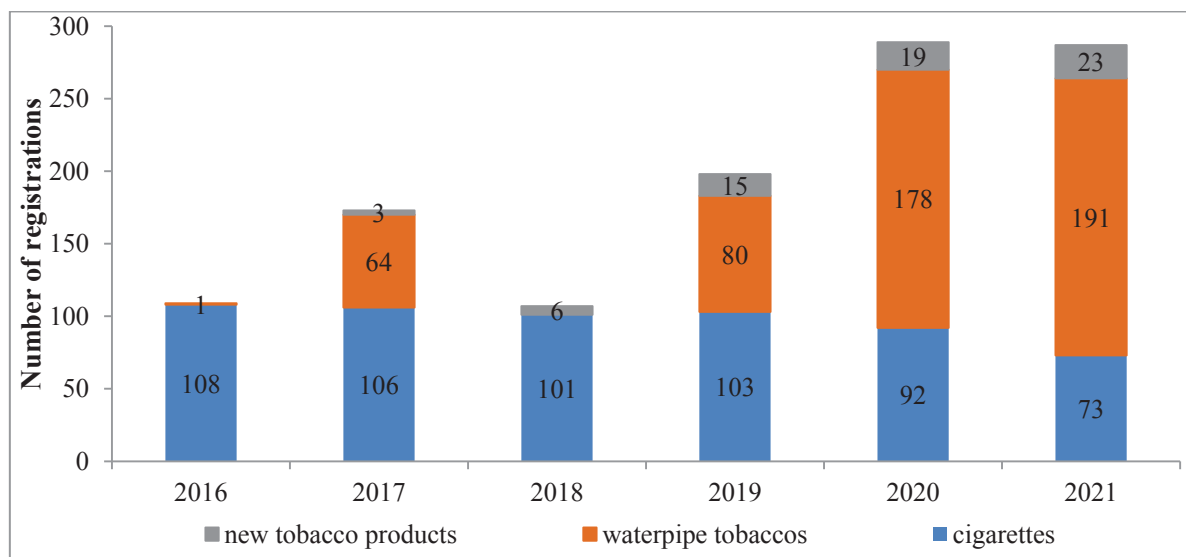


Figure 4. Number of registrations of new tobacco products, waterpipe tobaccos and cigarettes in Bulgaria in Tobacco sector from May 2016 to December 2021

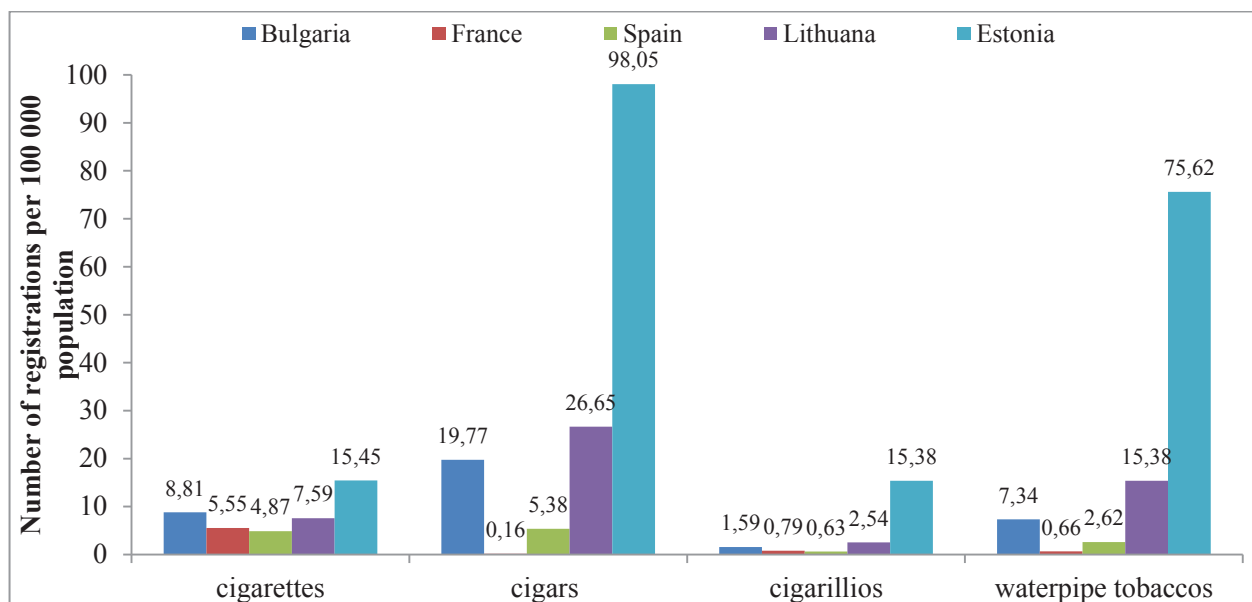


Figure 5. Number of registrations per 100 000 population for cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobaccos in the Tobacco sector in Bulgaria, France, Spain, Lithuania and Estonia

These types of products, unlike cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco, which are banned for their characteristic flavoring properties may and do have characteristic flavors and aromas, which also makes them more attractive, reducing the risk perception of the consumer. Therefore, this is a type of consumption that is growing in Bulgaria and it must be strictly and effectively regulated in a similar way to that of cigarettes and tobacco for contraction.

Waterpipe tobacco use has been found to be mainly among young people and is increasing worldwide, not only in Bulgaria (Maziak, 2019). New tobacco products also saw an increase in registrations. These are smokeless tobacco products, heated by an electric device, that do not exude smoke. In 2016 there is no registration of this product, while in 2021 the number of registrations reaches 23. By the end of 2021 the total number of registrations is 66.

Figure 5 presents the number of registrations per 100 000 population for cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobaccos in the Tobacco sector in Bulgaria, France, Spain, Lithuania and Estonia. Estonia has the highest number of registrations in all categories of tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobaccos) registered in the EU-CEG system. Only in the category cigarette (8.81), Bulgaria ranks second in the number of registrations per 100 000 population after Estonia

(15.45). In all other categories Bulgaria occupies an intermediate position and has a smaller number of registrations from Lithuania and Estonia, but with a larger number of registrations from France and Spain. Impressive is the large number of cigar registrations, followed by pipe tobacco in all countries (Rebollar et al., 2019, <https://www.anses.fr/en/content/tobacco-and-related-products>, <https://ntakd.lrv.lt> > ntakd > files > EU-CEG > tabakas, <https://www.terviseamet.ee/et/kemikaaliohutus-tooteohutus/toodete-kaitlejale/tubakatooted/tubakatooted-teavitamine>).

The smoke from cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobacco contains many harmful and potentially harmful compounds found in cigarette smoke, and using these products may expose smokers to these compounds at higher levels per puff than cigarettes. For example, cigar smoke may contain levels of carcinogens such as benzo[a]pyrene that are equivalent or, in some instances, higher than those in cigarette smoke (Malhotra et al., 2017). Rickert and colleagues reported that total particulate matter extracts from cigars and cigarillos were up to 200% more mutagenic, per unit of nicotine, relative to cigarette smoke (Rickert et al., 2007).

Row-your-own tobaccos, pipe tobaccos, nasal tobaccos, chewing tobaccos, herbal products for smoking and novel tobacco products account for

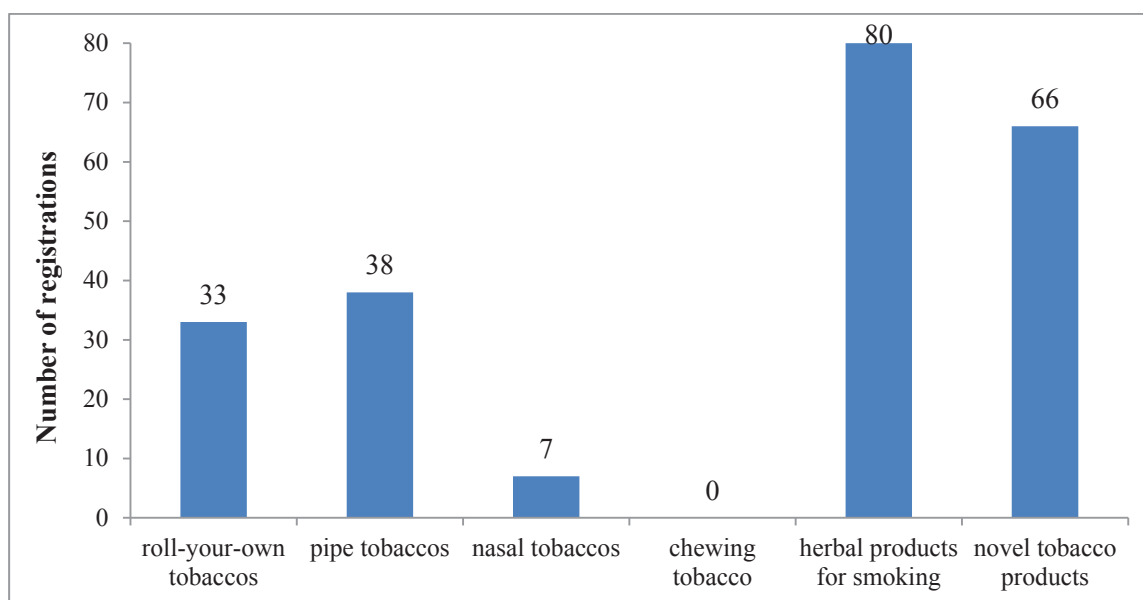


Figure 6. Number of registrations of row-your-own tobacco, pipe tobacco, nasal tobacco, chewing tobacco, herbal products for smoking and novel tobacco products in Bulgaria in Tobacco sector

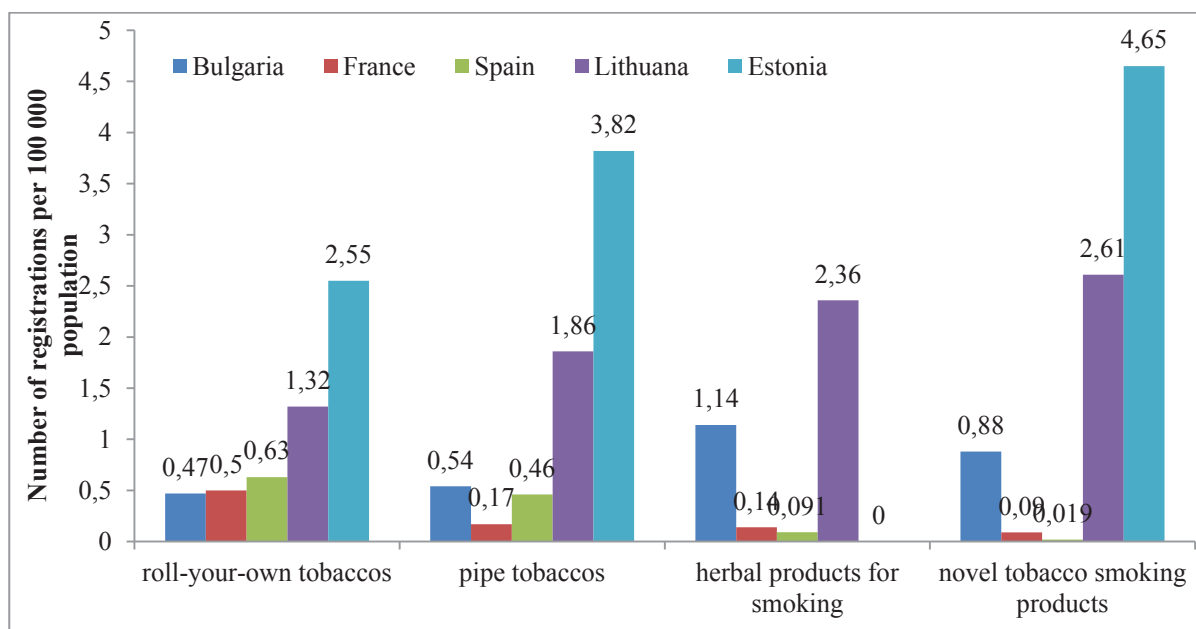


Figure 7. Number of registrations per 100 000 population of row-your-own tobacco, pipe tobacco, nasal tobacco, chewing tobacco, herbal products for smoking and novel tobacco products in Bulgaria in Tobacco sector in Bulgaria, France, Spain, Lithuania and Estonia

about 10% of all registered in the EU-CEG system for Bulgaria. From May 2016 to the end of December 2021, 80 herbal products for smoking, 66 new tobacco products, 38 pipe tobaccos, 33 row-your-own tobaccos and 7 nasal tobaccos were registered. The results are presented in Figure 6.

The number of registrations per 100,000 people for roll-your-own tobacco (0.47) and pipe tobacco (0.54) in Bulgaria is approximately the same and is close to the registrations in France (respectively 0.5 and 0.17) and Spain (respectively 0.63 and 0.46) and relatively less than these in Lithuania (respectively 1.32 and 1.86) and Estonia (respectively 2.55 and 3.82) - Fig. 7.

Impressively higher registration rate per 100,000 people of herbal smoking products (1.14) and new products for smoking tobacco (0.88) in Bulgaria compared to France (respectively 0.14 and 0.09) and Spain (respectively 0.09 and 0.019). The largest number of registrations for these products is installed in Lithuania (2.36) and Estonia (4.65).

The lowest numbers of registrations in all countries are nasal tobacco and chewing tobacco categories. The registrations do not exceed 0.1 per 100,000 people.

CONCLUSION

As of December 31, 2021, the EU-CEG portal for Bulgaria has 2 928 registrations of tobacco products and herbal smoking products, divided into 10 different categories. The number of registrations for Bulgaria has increased rapidly during the 5 years it has been working. The largest number of registrations was reported in 2016 (644) and 2020 (578), while the smallest - in 2018 (306).

Cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and waterpipe tobaccos have the highest number of registrations, accounting for 91% of all registrations.

The number of registered tobacco products for waterpipe tobaccos until 31. 12. 2021 is 514 and is approaching the number of cigarettes. This is the category that increases the number of registrations the fastest within 5 years. There is also a significant increase in the registrations of herbal smoking products and novel tobacco products.

In Bulgaria there is a saturated market of tobacco products and herbal smoking products. The number of registrations per 100 000 people in Bulgaria significantly exceeds that of France and Spain in all product categories. An exception is row-your-own

tobacco, which has fewer registrations per 100,000 people than France and Spain.

The TPD and the EU-CEG portal are powerful tools for controlling tobacco and related products, although challenges remain that require a joint and comprehensive approach. They demonstrate the will of the European Commission and the Member States to take care of the health of the population that makes tobacco and related tobacco products the most traceable products in terms of harm.

The need for further progress in aspects such as labeling, ingredients and new forms of consumption, such as devices or tobacco products capable of delivering or releasing nicotine, new heated tobacco products and waterpipe tobacco is emphasized.

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