

France set to ban smoking



France, where once every famous actor was seen smoking is set to become one of the toughest anti-smoking countries in the world.

Bright colours and brand names on cigarette packets will be replaced by health warnings in large letters and by big photographs of the diseased organs of smokers. Car drivers and passengers will be banned from smoking with children under 12 in the car.

Although this will not take effect until 2016, a TV and radio campaign started today, warning that tobacco kills one in two smokers.

The Health Minister, Marisol Touraine, said: "We can no longer accept the fact that the number of deaths caused by tobacco in France is the equivalent of an airliner crashing each day with 200 people on board."

Ms Touraine's long-term objective is to abolish smoking over 40 years by discouraging new generations from taking up the habit. Her medium-term objective is to reduce the French smoking

rate – one in three adults – to the present British rate of one in five adults, by 2024.

Until the late 1960s, almost two-thirds of French men smoked – but far fewer women. From 1976, a series of increasingly tough measures has been introduced, culminating in a ban on smoking in all public enclosed spaces, including bars and restaurants, from 2006.

The smoking rate among French men is much reduced but the habit has spread among French women. The smoking rate is gender equal now, just under 30%.

However French teenagers are now smoking as much as their parents. Officially, the smoking rate among 17-year-olds is 30 per cent.

Tobacconists have successfully lobbied for a slowing of price increases which had led to an apparent boom in tobacco smuggling.



True, False or Not given?

1. Many famous French actors were once seen smoking.
2. The fine for smoking in public places is 500 Euros.
3. Ms Touraine wants to abolish smoking by 2016.
4. A higher percentage of people in Britain smoke than in France.
5. As many men as women smoke in France.
6. French teenagers smoke as much as their parents' generation.
7. Increasing cigarette prices leads to increased smuggling.

Source - The Independent - abridged and simplified

Discussion topics

-Do you or does anyone in your family smoke?

-Does smoking disgust you?

-How would you feel if you were in a car with a smoker?

-Would you say anything if you saw someone smoking near a baby?

-Do you think France is right or wrong to have these new laws?