

2016

**FOREST ÉIREANN
ELECTION
MANIFESTO**



#SmokersAreVoters

ONE IN FIVE VOTERS SMOKE

- There are 800,000 smokers in Ireland, 20% of the electorate.
- Since 2004 smokers have been subjected to a series of measures including the smoking ban, the tobacco display ban, graphic health warnings and punitive taxation.
- Smokers contributed nearly €984 million to the Exchequer last year, far more than they allegedly cost the health service. They deserve better from our elected representatives.



IRELAND'S SECOND CLASS CITIZENS

- Ireland is one of the most regulated countries in the world in which to smoke. Smokers have generally accepted the many restrictions with good grace but enough is enough.
 - By denying smokers the ability to smoke in comfortable, designated smoking rooms and extending the smoking ban to some outdoor areas, policy makers are deliberately ostracising smokers from the community.
- Government is punishing smokers unfairly. Adults who choose to smoke have every right to do so without being under constant attack from policy makers.

PRICING SMOKERS OUT OF THE MARKET

- The massive increase in tobacco taxation over the last five years has been a disproportionate attack on Ireland's smokers.
- Many smokers come from lower socio-economic backgrounds meaning those who earn the least have been hit hardest by tax increases.
- Cigarette prices have risen by 16% in recent years driving people who can't afford to pay excessive prices towards the black market.



FUNDING CRIMINAL GANGS

- Ireland has some of the most expensive cigarettes in the world, but they can be bought for as little as €4.50 a pack on the black market.
- Criminals don't respect age restrictions. They will happily sell cigarettes to children.
- Illegal cigarettes cost taxpayers between €250m and €600m every year and criminals use the profits to fund further illegal activity.



FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS

- **Instead of targeting adults who choose to smoke, the next government should focus on strategies that are proven to reduce youth smoking rates.**
- **Targeted education programmes are needed in schools to make sure children are aware of the risks of smoking from a young age.**
- **Tobacco taxes must be cut to reduce demand for black market cigarettes with stiffer penalties for those who sell cigarettes to children.**



WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR

The war on tobacco is a smokescreen for the Government's failures in other areas. Forest Éireann urges the next government to:

- Stop treating Ireland's 800,000 smokers like second-class citizens.
- Respect their right to make informed choices about smoking a legal product.
- Reduce the punitive tax on tobacco and stop encouraging illicit trade.



Forest

Voice of the smoker in Ireland

**Forest Éireann
PO Box 322
Churchfield
Cork**

**Follow us on Twitter
@FEireann
#SmokersAreVoters**

**www.foresteireann.org
contact@foresteireann.org**

085 117 0943