

TWO PAGER - A national ban on fossil ads: why, what & how

1. Why a fossil ad ban?

What is a fossil ad ban

- **Fossil fuels need to be phased out as soon and fair as possible.**
- However fossil companies are still allowed to:
 - promote their polluting products (fossil cars, flights, cruises), and
 - greenwash their image via advertising and sponsorship deals.
- This means they **actively promote additional pollution** and normalize their industry with **misleading claims**.

Damage done by fossil ads

- The purpose of ads is to promote overconsumption by glamorizing ever-shifting and for most people unachievable standards. Huge companies **buy our attention in the streets, in newspapers and online**.
- Fossil companies glamorize ever-larger SUVs and more and longer distance flights.
- This directly leads to **toxic air, water and soil pollution, dangerous climate change and enhanced inequality**.

Pollution & inequality

- Fossil air pollution globally kills more people than smoking. It caused 8.7 million premature deaths in 2018: **1 in 5 deaths are caused by fossil air pollution** [1][2].
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization has thus named air pollution the “**new tobacco**” [3].
- The **climate crisis** is the greatest threat to human health in the 21st century [4].
- Both the climate crisis and pollution **hits those who have benefited least** from fossil growth hardest. So in the end, the working class of the world pays for the damage done by fossil ads.

Misleading on the climate crisis

- Fossil companies **greenwash** their image. But:
 - they highly contribute to **air pollution** and the **climate catastrophe**,
 - until this day still **continue expanding their fossil activities** [5][6], and
 - their contribution to the energy transition is insignificant: **oil and gas companies only account for 1% of total clean energy investment globally** [7].
 - This is in direct opposition with what their ads tell us.
- Greenwashing ads lead to false trust and are used as a lobbying tool towards decision makers to reduce green policies [8].

2. How to ban fossil ads?

It can be done: tobacco ads are already banned

- We have fought against unhealthy, unsustainable and misleading large companies before. Not long ago, tobacco companies were allowed to glamorize and promote smoking but tobacco ads are now forbidden in most countries.
- **Only after ads by tobacco companies were banned and the misleading messages from tobacco companies were no longer all around us did the full extent of the harmful consequences come into view.** We need to copy this strategy to fossil.
- The ad ban became a major turning point in cigarette sales, lung cancer cases and premature deaths caused by tobacco products [9]. And it finally created space to implement no-smoking zones in schools, public transport and restaurants.

Frontrunners around the world - find an overview on www.worldwithoutfossilads.org

- Already more than **50 municipalities in 10 countries and 3 national governments** have discussed or taken steps against fossil advertising in their public space.
- More and more **sports events, newspapers, cultural institutions and universities** are cutting ties with the fossil industry.
- Progressive political parties in Sweden, France, the UK and the Netherlands have a ban on fossil ads in their party program.
- **UN Secretary General António Guterres called for a global ban on fossil ads in June 2024.**

Scientific, legal and societal support - find an overview in the Factsheet, including:

- recommendations from the **IPCC, behavioral scientists and legal experts,**
- support from **healthcare professionals, the advertising industry and citizens,**
- international examples like Canada, Ireland, Amsterdam, Sydney, Stockholm and
- suggested **definition and scope** of a fossil ad ban.

How can fossil ads be banned nationally?

- For national fossil ad bans, it is extremely helpful to look at the historical example of a **tobacco ad ban**. This is also what recent national law proposals in Ireland and Canada have done, which have both been proposed this year (2024) but have not yet been voted on. Three countries have so far proposed bills and/or taken steps:
 - [2 proposals in Ireland](#) (March 2024): [Bill to prohibit advertising of fossil fuels and fossil fueled vehicles](#) and [Fossil Fuel Products \(Control of Advertising and Sponsorship\) Bill](#)
 - [Proposal in Canada](#) (February 2024): [The Fossil Fuel Advertising Act \(C-372\)](#)
 - [France bans ads for fossil fuel ads](#) (2021). This is after the [French Citizen's Convention on Climate](#) demanded a far stronger fossil ad ban, which the French government unfortunately watered down.
- On EU level, the [Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive](#) has been adopted, which means that (fossil) companies are not allowed anymore to make

green claims without substantiating them (a similar law has been passed in [Canada](#)). This EU Directive now needs to be implemented in each member state, which provides an additional possibility to open up the debate if fossil ads shouldn't be regulated more strictly.

Sources

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- [9] Figure 1 in Max R. (2021). Smoking: How large of a global problem is it? And how can we make progress against it? <https://ourworldindata.org/smoking-big-problem-in-brief>