

Austria falls in line with Europe to ban smoking in restaurants

10 April 2015

Austria on Friday finally decided to ban smoking in cafes and restaurants from 2018 after years of debate in a country famed for its cafe culture.

"We have at last joined Europe in terms of protecting non-smokers," Health Minister Sabine Oberhauser said.

Smoking is banned in public places in Austria under a 2009 law but restaurants and cafes are exempted and the government admits that the legislation is not tightly enforced.

The future smoking ban also includes [electronic cigarettes](#) but exempts hotels which can still maintain [smoking rooms](#).

Austria figures among Western European countries where cigarettes are cheapest. A third of its population are smokers against an EU average of 28 percent, according to a study conducted in 2012.

The country has smoking areas in [public places](#) such as supermarkets. The anti-smoking law is being opposed by many restaurant and cafe owners and the Austrian chamber of commerce has said it is mulling whether to file a suit in the constitutional court.

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