

EU launches anti-smoking virals

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[Mark Sweney](#)

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'Nicoclean' viral: tongue-in-cheek ad promoting a nicotine skin cream that turns complexions grey.

The European Union is launching an anti-smoking campaign with a series of tongue-in-cheek viral ads promoting fake nicotine-based products.

Developed by French agency Ligaris, the campaign also includes a spoof website, [nicomarket.com](#), for a corporation peddling the products - complete with a contact email address and chairman profile.

The four tongue-in-cheek virals are being seeded on entertainment and youth community websites, by specialists GoViral, in the big five European territories of the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy.

Each of the virals promotes a different product - a room-freshener, throat spray, toothpaste and skin cream - with the twist being that the nicotine-based products have adverse effects.

The skin cream viral, for Nicoclean, looks like a regular beauty ad with a beautiful woman seen using the product.

However, the ad goes on to reveal that a benefit of Nicoclean is that it gives users a "deathly grey complexion in minutes".

Another of the viral ads features a singer, whose voice becomes gravelly after using a nicotine throat spray, proudly states that "your voice will never be the same".

The EU ad strategy has been devised by Aegis-owned digital media agency Isobar.

During the World Cup in 2002 the EU hooked up with European footballing body Uefa to run a range of TV ads, featuring well-known footballers, to push an anti-smoking message to 12- to 18-year-olds with the strapline "Feel free to say no".

In August, the European Commission and Uefa also teamed up to launch [an anti-obesity TV campaign](#) - featuring a group of armchair-ridden couch potatoes struggling to play football - that will run throughout this year's Champions League coverage.

The 30-second ad, "Go on, get out of your armchair", is scheduled to run more than 2,000 times during the half-time breaks in each match over the course of the September to May competition.