

9 July 2013

Dear Member of the ENVI Committee,

Tobacco Kills.

We know this.

In fact tobacco kills 1 in every 2 of its long-term users. Approximately **one person dies every 6 seconds** due to tobacco-related disease. And the EU has one of the **highest** proportions of deaths attributed to tobacco use **in the world** – 16% of all deaths of Europeans age 30 and above are **because of tobacco**. This is in stark contrast to Africa's 3%, and Asia's 7%. [WHO]

We know that tobacco users who fall ill or die prematurely **deprive their families of income**, impose a **dramatic burden** on the health care system and **hinder economic development** across the board. [WHO]

We know this all too well.

Yet it seems some European elected representatives are still willing to compromise and soften their stance on the Tobacco Products Directive which, at its full strength, could make a significant change in public health in Europe as we now know it.

Death caused by tobacco use is preventable. And that is precisely what a strong Tobacco Products Directive will achieve.

We urge you to vote in favour of:

- ✓ Health warnings that take up 75% on the front and back of packaging
- ✓ Discontinuing the use of flavours including menthol that make cigarettes more attractive and palatable
- ✓ Taking off the market the so-called slim cigarettes that are a powerful marketing tool targeting, in particular, young women and girls

We are the ECDA, the European Chronic Disease Alliance – an alliance of 10 organisations working in different disease areas representing over 100,000 health professionals and millions of patients. We are all concerned and affected by the contents of the proposed Directive.

The European Union has the highest number of deaths and disability in the world due to chronic diseases. These diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases, diabetes, kidney and liver diseases, are in a large part directly linked to tobacco use. More than a third of Europeans suffer from a chronic disease, and these diseases account for 70-80 % of our health care costs.

Diseases which are known to be caused by smoking are chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema), and smoking is a key risk factor for coronary heart disease, stroke, abdominal aortic aneurysm, chronic kidney disease, acute myeloid leukaemia, esophageal, laryngeal, lung, oral, throat, kidney, stomach, and pancreatic cancers.

We are disturbed that some of Europe's Health Ministers have seemingly put aside their responsibility for health in their respective countries and stepped in line to follow the apparently economic-driven argument for a lighter Tobacco Products Directive. Studies have shown that money no longer spent on tobacco products does not disappear from the economy but is spent on other goods and services which create new jobs outside tobacco. [\[Action on Smoking and Health\]](#)

Furthermore, some justifications provided by your colleagues in other Committees for deleting specific texts from the Directive do not stand up to scrutiny, and do little more than put us right back where we started – with one of the world's softest legislations on tobacco.

The imprudence of these actions is alarming because surely the only economic argument of relevance is the staggering cost for tobacco-related disease to European society each year [\[EC Impact Assessment, Annex A.5 Socio-Economic Impact of the Options\]](#):

25.3 billion EUR	Direct health care costs
8.3 billion EUR	Productivity losses
517 billion EUR	Monetary value of life years lost

A 'light' tobacco Products Directive would mean a victory for the tobacco industry yet again at the grim expense of European public health and frankly this will raise serious questions about who really benefits from the EU and how it responds to its citizens' concerns.

We, the ECDA urge you, our MEPs to stand strong against the lobby from the tobacco industry and to ensure your actions and your vote are focussed firmly on the health and well-being of the Europeans who have entrusted their futures to you.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Norbert Lameire

Chair, European Chronic Disease Alliance