

EUROPEAN NEWS BULLETIN 219: 19-25 October 2007

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GERMANY: CSU decides on total ban on smoking in public places

In the German state of Bavaria there is to be a total ban on smoking in all public places, including the hospitality sector as of 1 January 2008. This was the resolution of the CSU fraction in the Bavarian state parliament on 24 October 2007. The previous proposal had contained numerous exemptions. As of 1 January 2008 smoking is to be banned in restaurants, cafés, marquees and discotheques without exception.

Source: Passauer Neue Presse, 25 October 2007

<http://www.pnp.de/nachrichten/artikel.php?cid=29-17726579&Ressort=pol&BNR=0>

UK: Conservative party wants to stamp out tobacco subsidies costing British taxpayers

In the same week as a report revealed Britons are more likely to die from smoking than the average across the European Union, Conservative MEPs stated that they wish to cut tobacco production subsidies in the EU to zero, saving taxpayers more than € 14 m. Some € 14,250,000 have been earmarked for tobacco subsidies in the draft 2008 EU Budget, which was voted on in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Thursday (25 October 2007). An amendment tabled by Conservative MEPs calls for the subsidies to be cut, saving European taxpayers millions over the next financial year. Budgets spokesman Richard Ashworth MEP said: "Subsidising tobacco production in the European Union is inconsistent with the aims and objections of the Public Health Programme of the EU and consequently represents very poor value for money for EU citizens." Health spokesman John Bowis MEP said: "We now have a very successful smoking ban in the UK and British taxpayers should not in the meantime be paying to subsidise tobacco production in the EU."

Source: Conservative Party News, 24 October 2007

http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=139918

* Institutional News *

EC: Commission outlines EU health policy strategy

On 23 October 2007 the European Commission adopted a new strategy *Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*. The proposed strategy focuses on three strategic themes: fostering good health in an ageing Europe; protecting citizens from health threats; dynamic health systems and new technologies. The Commission emphasises the need to integrate health into all policies and strengthen the EU's voice in global health.

Source: EurActiv, 25 October 2007

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/health/commission-outlines-eu-health-policy-strategy/article-167851>

White Paper *Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/Documents/strategy_wp_en.pdf

EC: Finland referred to ECJ second time over oral tobacco

The European Commission has decided to refer Finland to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for a second time for failing to comply with an earlier judgement by the European Court of Justice on 18 May 2006 concerning tobacco for oral use in the Åland Islands. The Court's judgment in this case (C-343/05) confirmed Finland's failure to comply with Article 8 of Directive 2001/37/EC on the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products, which prohibits the placing of tobacco for oral use on the market. The Commission will ask the Court to condemn Finland to pay a lump sum and, if Finland fails to comply before the judgment, a daily penalty. Tobacco for oral use contains particularly large quantities of carcinogenic substances. Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou said: "The Commission decision underlines that, given the health risks linked to the use of oral tobacco, the Commission has no tolerance for allowing the placing on the market of that product. We cannot accept that the prohibition of placing of tobacco for oral use on the market is not transposed or implemented by Member States or even by parts of Member States. Only the consistent and continuous application by all Member States of all Community provisions relating to tobacco can achieve our goals in fighting tobacco."

Source: European Commission Press Release, 23 October 2007

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1592&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EC: Commission asked to study risks of snus

Swedish MEPs, backed by Liberals, voted on Wednesday 24 October 2007 through an amendment pressing the Commission "to investigate the health risks associated with consumption of snus and its impact on the consumption of cigarettes". Markos Kyprianou, Health Commissioner, dismissed the call. The Commissioner's spokesman said: "He considers snus to be a harmful product. There has been sufficient investigation to determine that. It is not desirable to replace one harmful product with another." The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks, which advises the Commission, is reviewing research on snus's health effects.

Source: Financial Times, 25 October 2007

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/71a22982-8285-11dc-a5ae-0000779fd2ac.html?nclick_check=1

EP: Karl-Heinz Florenz report is discussed in EP plenary session

The own-initiative report by Karl-Heinz Florenz proposing a wide-range of restrictions on smoking in public places was debated in the plenary session of the European Parliament on 23 October 2007.

Source: The Parliament, 22 October 2007

European Parliament agenda:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+AGENDA+20071023-LASTV+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

EP: European Parliament calls for EU-wide ban on smoking in the workplace

In its first response to a Commission consultation document, the European Parliament – in an own-initiative report adopted on 24 October 2007 – called for wide-ranging measures to restrict smoking in public places and make it harder for under-age people to purchase cigarettes. The report was adopted with 561 votes in favour, 63 against and 36 abstentions. MEPs welcomed the European Commission's Green Paper *Towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke: policy options at EU level*, but regard the Green Paper merely as a starting point. MEPs urge the Commission to designate environmental tobacco smoke a class 1 carcinogen and recommend that Member States impose smoking bans in all enclosed workplaces, including catering establishments, as well as in all enclosed public buildings and transport within a period of two years. If these objectives are not attained, the Commission is urged to submit a proposal for rules on the protection of non-smokers in the field of employment protection by 2011. The Commission is also asked to produce a report on the cost incurred to national health

systems and the EU economy as a result of smoking and tobacco smoke. The EP believes Directive 2001/37/EC on tobacco products should be updated to toughen up the rules on tobacco additives, including those which are carcinogenic or addiction-enhancing. The report also insists that the same directive include a renewed library of larger, hard-hitting picture warnings be made mandatory on all tobacco products sold in the EU. MEPs also call on the Commission to urgently investigate the health risks associated with consumption of snus and its impact on the consumption of cigarettes. Finally, MEPs ask the Commission to examine measures such as introducing an EU-wide ban on the sale of tobacco products to people under 18 years of age, allowing cigarette machines to be placed only where they are inaccessible to minors, removing tobacco products from self-service displays in retail outlets and banning distance sales of tobacco products to young people (e.g. over the internet). The report calls on Member States to commit themselves to reduce smoking among youth by at least 50% by 2025 and for the Commission to consider an EU-wide high minimum level of taxation of tobacco products. Directing their attention to their own workplace, MEPs call for the Parliament – “in the light of its duty to set an example” – to adopt a smoking ban with no exemptions in all areas of its premises.

Source: European Parliament Press Service, 24 October 2007

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/066-12157-295-10-43-911-20071023IPR12111-22-10-2007-2007-true/default_en.htm

*** Reports/Research/Conferences ***

STUDY: Major study reveals levels of carbon monoxide pollution across Europe

A clear link has been established between high levels of smoking and CO pollution in both smokers and non smokers. The HELP-COMETs (Carbon monOxide Measure of Exposure to Tobacco Smoke) report, which is a study of over 111,835 smokers and non-smokers across the 27 EU Member States, has clearly demonstrated the link between smoking and high levels of CO pollution in both smokers and non smokers. The report prepared by Professor Bertrand Dautzenberg, who is a professor of chest medicine at Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, utilised the results of CO tests taken at over 400 events organised by the HELP – For a life without tobacco campaign. Key findings are: smokers in Europe are heavily polluted by CO from cigarette smoke (the mean level of exhaled CO in the 49,392 smokers tested was 17.5 p.p.m.); non-smokers are affected by CO pollution from smokers (the mean level of exhaled CO amongst the 62,433 non smokers was 3.9 p.p.m.); in countries with advanced tobacco control measures the mean level of exhaled CO in non-smokers is just 2.5 p.p.m. compared with 5.2 p.p.m. in countries without a smoking ban.

Source: Kestrel WorldCom, 19 October 2007

http://www.responsesource.com/releases/rel_display.php?relid=34574&hilite

PROJECT: *Closing the Gap* project concludes that there are huge health gaps in the EU
The *Closing the Gap* project examining the health gap between the eastern and western EU Member States concludes that the main reasons for differences in premature death rates and ill-health are lifestyle-related. Professor Witold Zatoński summarised the results of the EU-funded project, which studied health inequalities between the EU 15 and the ten new eastern Member States: “This gap is characterised by much higher mortality rates for cardiovascular diseases in Eastern European countries, which is very strongly connected to access to related medical services but also to lifestyle factors. Tobacco smoking, diet and alcohol seem to be essential factors with regard to decreasing mortality from CVD diseases.” Whereas tobacco remains a leading cause of premature death throughout the EU, a positive improvement is now evident in Eastern Europe, as the number of smokers is declining.

Source: EurActiv, 23 October 2007

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/health/lifestyle-source-health-inequalities/article-167830>

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