

EUROPEAN NEWS BULLETIN 229: 15-21 February 2008

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SWITZERLAND: Canton of Valais/Wallis bans smoking in public places

The council of the canton of Valais/Wallis approved a new health bill on Thursday 14 February 2008 and simultaneously decided to ban smoking in public places. Valais/Wallis is thus the fifth Swiss canton to ban smoking in public places. With 75 votes in favour, 31 against and 9 abstentions, the members of parliament adopted the health legislation in a second hearing.

Valais/Wallis is the fifth canton in Switzerland to ban smoking in public places.

Source: Radio Suisse Romande, 15 February 2008

http://info.rsr.ch/fr/suisse/La_fumee_bannie_des_lieux_publics_en_Valais.html?siteSect=200101&sid=8741810&cKey=1203064287000

*** Institutional News ***

EC: Programme 2008-2013 notice of call for expressions of interest 2008/S 28-036831

A call for expressions of interest was launched on 9 February 2008 to draw up a list of experts to assist in the activities in connection with the Second Programme of Community Action in the field of health (2008–2013). These activities include: (1) improve people's health security; (2) promote health; (3) generate and disseminate health information and knowledge. The deadline for submission of applications is 30 October 2010. Full details are available on DG SANCO's website.

Source: SANCO News, 18 February 2008

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/ami/ami_036831_en.htm

EC: SCENIHR opinion on smokeless tobacco products

In its 22nd plenary meeting on 6 February 2008 the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) adopted its opinion on smokeless tobacco products, concluding that they are addictive and hazardous to health. Furthermore, the Committee examined the role of these products in smoking initiation and cessation, as well as the possibility to extrapolate the experience and use patterns from countries permitting the use of oral tobacco to other EU Member States, where this use is currently banned. According to the opinion, which was published on 18 February 2008 after a public consultation, smokeless tobacco is addictive and withdrawal symptoms are broadly similar to those seen in smokers. Smokeless tobacco products contain various levels of toxic substances and these products are carcinogenic to humans. The Committee also stated that on the available evidence it is not possible to draw conclusions as to the relative effectiveness of smokeless tobacco as an aid to smoking cessation in comparison with established therapies.

Source: Health & Consumer e-News, 18 February 2008

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihp/docs/scenihp_o_013.pdf

WHO: INB-1 meets 11-16 February 2008

Official representatives of some 130 countries wrapped up talks in Geneva on 16 February 2008 on a new treaty, the Illicit Trade Protocol, to curb the smuggling, counterfeiting, and illicit manufacturing of tobacco products. At this week's negotiations, which were convened by the WHO, the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) recommended to the participating nations that they retain important measures for addressing the illicit trade of tobacco products like cigarettes in the evolving text of the Protocol. These measures include international co-operation on investigation and prosecution of illicit trade cases, systems for tracking and tracing tobacco products, criminalisation and increased penalties for illegal activity, and enhanced law enforcement. The Protocol is being negotiated as a subsidiary agreement to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Source: FCA Press Release, 15 February 2008

<http://www.fctc.org/index.php?item=inb1-docs>

*** ENSP Network News ***

GERMANY: Dr Pötschke-Langer is awarded Federal Cross of Merit

Dr. Martina Pötschke-Langer, a scientist at the German Cancer Research Centre and head of the WHO Collaboration Centre for Tobacco Control in Heidelberg, was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit for her services to education about the risks of smoking and cancer prevention. Dr. Pötschke-Langer received the award from Professor Peter Frankenberg, Minister of Science, Research and the Arts of the state of Baden-Württemberg, on 14 February 2008. Professor Frankenberg said that it was Dr. Pötschke-Langer's great personal commitment that has helped bring the issue of tobacco control to the forefront of public attention and underlined in particular her dedication to educating children and young persons. It has also been largely due to her work that the state parliaments of the German *Länder* have enacted legislation for the protection of non-smokers.

Source: Bildungsklick.de, 14 February 2008

<http://bildungsklick.de/pm/58403/dr-martina-poetschke-langer-erhaelt-bundesverdienstkreuz/>

Source: Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, 16 February 2008

http://www.rnz.de/RNZ_HDKreis/00_20080216074700_Beharrlich_im_Kampf_gegen_den_blaeu_Dunst.html

*** Reports/Research/Conferences ***

PROJECT: *Demos@Work* - new online platform for citizen/representative dialogue launched
Demos@Work, a new online platform for dialogue between citizens and their representatives, was launched on 20 February 2008. The project aims to initiate a European-wide discussion on the harmful effects of smoking between citizens and elected representatives through the creation of an online platform. The project is co-financed under the 2007 e-participation call. The first pilots are to take place in Catalonia and Lithuania in co-operation with the relevant parliaments. The partners of the project are the following: GFI, Gov2u, National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Parliament of Catalonia, Parliament of Lithuania and ScytI. The online platform will serve for an active and open dialogue between regional/national-level elected representatives, the European Parliament and citizens on health issues. More specifically, the project aims to: address the issue of citizen disengagement from decision-making processes, strengthen the EU fight against tobacco use, improve the quality of services provided to citizens, facilitate the work of MPs and increase the awareness of the Parliament activities among its citizens.

Source: *Demos@Work* Press Release, 20 February 2008

<http://www.demosatwork.org/>

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