

EUROPEAN NEWS BULLETIN 230: 22-28 February 2008

Produced by the European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP)

* National Tobacco Control News *

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AUSTRIA: Health Minister Kdolsky says that smoking ban in hospitality sector is "useless"
Austrian Health Minister Andrea Kdolsky believes that a smoking ban in the hospitality sector is "useless" adding that e.g. in Italy smoking prevalence has not been reduced by the smoking ban. Minister Kdolsky remarked that there were no current studies to prove that a smoking ban in hospitality premises had an effect on smoking patterns. She also commented that reports that passive smoking causes up to one hundred fatalities per year has not been substantiated. [Editor's note: In fact the 268 premature deaths per year quoted in the publication *Lifting the Smokescreen* by the Smoke-free Partnership and also funded by the European Heart Network is likely to be an underestimate and the Austrian Council for Smoking & Health has uncovered evidence that the Ministry of Health simply copies information from the tobacco industry.] Minister Kdolsky quoted Italy as an example of the failure of smoking bans, where smoking has not declined. Her statements are, however, clearly refuted by the most recent report of the Italian Ministry of Health, which states that cigarette sales had declined by some 50 m. packets in 2007 compared to 2006 and the number of myocardial infarctions has also decreased since the smoking ban was introduced at the start of 2005.

Source: Die Presse, 24 February 2008

<http://diepresse.com/home/panorama/oesterreich/365108/index.do>

Source: Lifting the Smokescreen, Smoke-free Partnership, Table 8: Estimated annual deaths attributable to passive smoking in non-smokers by age, site of exposure and condition, member countries of the EU, 2002, page 34

http://www.ersnet.org/ers/show/default.aspx?id_attach=13509

BELGIUM: Cigarette sales decline in 2007

According to figures published by the Federal Department of Economics, sales of cigarettes declined by 6.7% in Belgium in 2007. 12.5 billion cigarettes were sold in 2007, compared to 13.4 billion in 2006.

Source: Le Vif/L'Express, 25 February 2008

<http://www.levif.be/sante-et-equilibre/72-86-13398/le-belge-achete-moins-de-cigarettes-en-2007.html>

FRANCE: Two months after smoke-free law heart attack incidence is falling

Less than two months since France's comprehensive smoking ban came into force, a report submitted to the Health Minister on 21 February 2008 demonstrates its immediate health benefits. The report highlights a drastic decline (15%) of admissions to emergency wards for myocardial infarctions since 1 January 2008 (compared to January and February 2006 and 2007). According to Professor Bertrand Dautzenberg, who was commissioned by the Ministry of Health in 2006 to conduct an evaluation of the comprehensive smoking ban in public places: "If this figure continues throughout the year, this would mean a reduction of 10,000 heart attacks in 2008." This positive result, which has become evident immediately after implementation of the law, is similar to trends noted in Ireland and Italy. The monthly passive

smoking indicator also shows a similar decline in the number of strokes. Professor Dautzenberg noted: "The health benefits did not appear after the smoking ban in workplaces, but did when it was applied to cafés and restaurants. This proves that this sector was a significant source of exposure to passive smoking. European countries which continue to permit smoking in cafés can take inspiration from this finding." However, he added that the legislation has had no effect on tobacco consumption figures and sales of NRT and calls to quitlines have remained constant.

Source: Le Figaro, 22 February 2008

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualites/2008/02/23/01001-20080223ARTFIG00146-interdiction-de-fumerles-infarctus-deja-en-baisse.php>

OFT Press Release

<http://www.oft-asso.fr/pdf/CP220208%20Evaluation%20des%20b%E9n%E9fices%20de%20l%27interdiction%20de%20fumer.pdf>

RUSSIA: Bill to join FCTC submitted to parliament

The Russian government has submitted to the lower house of parliament a draft law for Russia to join the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control convention, the State Duma said on its website on Tuesday 26 February 2008.

Source: Novosti, 26 February 2008

<http://en.rian.ru/society/20080226/100051987.html>

SWITZERLAND: Canton of Geneva to become smoke-free

Smoking is to be banned in the Swiss canton of Geneva in all public places, restaurants, bars and discotheques. On Sunday 24 February 2008 electors adopted the initiative on passive smoking and health. The results showed that 79.2% of voters were in favour; the participation rate was a high of 61.55%. The smoking ban could become effective in summer 2008. Geneva is the sixth Swiss canton to introduce a smoking ban/restrictions.

Source: 20minutes, 24 February 2008

<http://www.20min.ch/ro/news/geneve/story/10565131>

Source: Tagesanzeiger, 24 February 2008

<http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/dyn/news/schweiz/844836.html>

EURO 2008: No smoking ban in football stadiums during Euro 2008 championship

UEFA has stated that smoking will be permitted in the stadiums during the European Championship. UEFA has decided not to implement a smoking ban, going against the current non-smoking trend in football. UEFA Press Officer Pascale Vögeli stated to the SDA news agency that the stadiums in Vienna, Salzburg, Klagenfurt, Innsbruck, Zurich, Basle, Berne and Geneva will not have any restrictions on smoking, as the legal situation in both Austria and Switzerland permits smoking at these venues. As organiser of the event, UEFA could have implemented a smoking ban, but decided not to.

Source: Die Presse, 25 February 2008

<http://diepresse.com/home/sport/fussball/euro2008/365270/index.do>

*** Institutional News ***

EC: Commissioner Kyprianou submits resignation

Commissioner Kyprianou has submitted his resignation to join the Cypriot government as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Pursuant to Article 215 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, the resignation will be effective as soon as a successor has been nominated by the Republic of Cyprus and appointed by the Council. President Barroso is consulting with the President of the Republic of Cyprus over the nomination of the successor. According to Cypriot press, his successor is likely to be the Cypriot MP Androulla Vassiliou, wife of former Cypriot president George Vassiliou, who led the island from 1988 to 1993. The new Commissioner will stay in office for 18 months as the current Commission mandate ends in autumn 2009.

Source: European Commission Press Release, 27 February 2008

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/355&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Source: Euractiv, 29 February 2008

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/commissoner-kyprinou-quits-new-cypriot-foreign-minister/article-170627>

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This bulletin receives the financial support of the European Commission.