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*** National Tobacco Control News ***

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AUSTRIA: Customs get serious at Czech border crossing

Austrian customs officials have started imposing tough fines on persons bringing Czech cigarettes into Austria and confiscate all cigarettes over the import limit. Under the law, passed shortly before the Czech Republic joined the Schengen area in December 2007, a traveller may only export 200 cigarettes with the Czech-language health warning message while travelling from the Czech Republic to Austria. Drivers have to pay a € 50 fine for each additional carton of cigarettes if caught and Austrian police also confiscate the cigarettes from them.

Source: Prague Daily Monitor, 14 May 2008

http://www.praquemonitor.com/en/334/czech_national_news/22659/

BELGIUM: Campaign highlights passive smoking around pregnant women and children
As part of Family Week a new campaign against passive smoking has been launched by Belgian respiratory associations FARES and VRGT with the aim of protecting pregnant women and children from passive smoking, as these groups are particularly vulnerable. Sensitising the public to passive smoking is one of the objectives of the national anti-cancer plan, which had already been presented by Health Minister Laurette Onkelinx (PS). The Health Minister has announced that the budget for prevention is to be increased and that support facilities for cancer patients are to be improved. The anti-cancer plan also aims to reimburse patients enrolled in quitting programmes performed by qualified quitting experts.

Source: 7sur7, 13 May 2008

<http://www.7sur7.be/7s7/fr/1523/Famille/article/detail/274186/2008/5/13/Contre-le-tabagisme-passif-chez-l-enfant-et-la-femme-enceinte.dhtml>

Campaign websites:

<http://www.grossessesanstabac.be/>

<http://www.rookvrijezwangerschap.be/>

BELGIUM: Comprehensive smoking ban is being considered by government

The option of extending the smoking ban in Belgium to all hospitality venues was discussed by the governmental Health Commission on Tuesday 20 May 2008, following the results of the first year of inspection in the sector. In Belgium smoking is banned in restaurants, but is not in cafés and establishments where food accounts for no more than one-third of the establishment's turnover. Public health inspectors visited some 25,000 premises and found that more than 60% of cafés permitting smoking were in breach of the legislation. In fact, the legislation is too complicated to be enforced correctly and it would be more effective simply to do away with the exemptions it contains. This view is shared by the vast majority of MPs sitting on the Health Commission. Health Minister Laurette Onkelinx has asked for further proposals to be examined. The law as it stands creates competitive distortion between venues respecting the law and venues in breach of it.

Source: Le Soir, 22 May 2008

<http://www.lesoir.be/actualite/belgique/sante-des-auditions-seront-2008-05-22-600000.shtml>

FRANCE: Flavoured cigarettes are experiencing a boom among young people. According to a survey published by *Alliance contre le tabac* on 21 May 2008, flavoured cigarettes have become the most common mode of initiation to smoking among young people. These products are marketed in attractive packaging and come in chocolate, vanilla and strawberry flavours. Professor Bertrand Dautzenberg, President of the association, said: "This sweet-flavoured tobacco has reached its target group: it is a means of initiation which attracts the youngest pupils, girls and boys alike." The survey found that 30% of smokers aged 13 years consume these products, a figure which drops rapidly to 5% already at the age of 15. The taste and style of flavoured cigarettes serves to reassure consumers: according to the survey, more than half of those questioned believed that flavoured cigarettes were less dangerous than other products.

Source: Le Figaro, 22 May 2008

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2008/05/22/01016-20080522ARTFIG00346-les-cigarettes-bonbons-attirent-les-adolescents.php>

SCOTLAND: Plans to ban tobacco displays revealed

Plans to ban cigarette displays in shops have been announced by the Scottish government. Public Health Minister Shona Robison said that giving tobacco "pride of place" on shop shelves did not fit in with the drive to tackle smoking-related illness. She announced a series of other measures to the Scottish Parliament, which also include tobacco licensing and outlawing the sale of cigarettes in ten-packs. Legislation is likely to be brought forward in 2009. Ms Robison told Members of the Scottish Parliament: "Despite tobacco advertising having been banned in 2002, there are growing concerns that prominent displays of cigarettes and other tobacco products in shops and other points of sale are undermining our wider tobacco control efforts to denormalise smoking."

Source: BBC News, 21 May 2008

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/7412509.stm

SWITZERLAND: Study finds huge levels of particulate matter in Swiss hospitality sector. Smoking establishments have levels of particulate matter 33 times higher than non-smoking venues. A scientific study performed on behalf of *Lungenliga Schweiz* examined particulate matter in 99 hospitality venues and found very high levels of contamination caused by tobacco smoke in Swiss restaurants, cafés and bars. Extensive protection from passive smoking without any exceptions is urgently needed. If the Council of State does not adopt an effective protection from passive smoking during the summer session, *Lungenliga Schweiz* is examining whether it can launch a referendum.

Source: Lungenliga Schweiz press release, 18 May 2008

http://www.lung.ch/de/angebote/fuer-medien/pressemitteilungen/detail/artikel/190/massive-fein-1.html?no_cache=1&cHash=20c59c9f81

*** Reports/Research/Conferences ***

CONFERENCE: 10th European Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) conference. The scientific programme of the 10th European Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) conference, which is due to be held in Rome from 23 to 26 September 2008, is now available online.

Source: SRNT information release, 19 April 2008

<http://www.srnt2008rome.com/programme.php>

PRESS CONFERENCE: Does the 2008 tobacco law revision comply with the latest scientific findings?

This press conference, which was organised by the Austrian Academy of Sciences Clean Air Commission on 20 May 2008, examined the issue of whether the 2008 tobacco law revision takes into account the state-of-the-art of science in relation to passive smoking, the risks of which have been underestimated to date. Examples from other European countries have

demonstrated that the level of air-borne contaminants declined significantly after the introduction of a smoking ban. The revised tobacco law in Austria has improved the situation by banning smoking in workplaces, however it did allow for extensive exceptions (particularly in the hospitality sector, where premises under 50 m² can choose to remain smoking venues and those over 80 m² only have to install a smoking room displaying appropriate signage), which makes the legislation very difficult to enforce.

Source: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 13 May 2008

http://www.oeaw.ac.at/shared/news/2008/press_inf_20080513.html

Press releases:

http://www.oeaw.ac.at/shared/news/2008/pdf/PG_Tabakgesetznovelle_200508_Presseunterlagen.pdf

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