

Brussels, 1 March 2005

“HELP – For a life without tobacco”: EU launches new anti-smoking campaign

Young people, non-smokers and those wanting to quit can get help to lead a life without tobacco, according to a new, € 72 million EU anti-smoking campaign launched today. EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou kicked off the campaign at the Rond-Point Schuman outside the European Commission's Berlaymont headquarters in Brussels by unveiling the campaign slogan “HELP: For a Life Without Tobacco” on a giant inflatable structure which will tour all 25 EU capitals. The new campaign has been devised for the European Commission by a consortium of health experts and PR professionals (see [MEMO/05/68](#) for details). The roadshow will be followed by a “HELP” TV and cinema advertising campaign over the summer. Commissioner Kyprianou said: “The sickness and death caused by smoking costs EU countries € 100 billion a year. Prevention and information campaigns like “HELP” are an investment in a healthier and more prosperous future for our citizens. As well as promoting tobacco-free lifestyles to young people, the campaign will also highlight the dangers of passive smoking and support the trend towards tobacco-free public places.” The European Commission has earmarked € 72 million for the new campaign between now and 2008. Adolescents (15 to 18 year olds) and young adults (18 to 30 years olds) will be the main target groups.

Markos Kyprianou, the European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, said: *“Eight out of ten smokers start in their teenage years. Once hooked, it is a habit that takes many of them to an early grave. Every year, 650,000 EU citizens die from tobacco related disease. I am determined to do everything I can to stop young people taking up smoking, and to help young smokers kick the habit before it ruins their health. I want to see a major shift in our society, where being smoke-free becomes the norm and the smoke-addicted are a dwindling minority. If all EU countries followed the lead of Ireland, Italy and Malta and banned smoking in public places it would go a long way to achieving this.”*

“HELP” is the second major EU-wide anti-smoking campaign run by the Commission. It will build on the experience of the first such campaign, “Feel Free to Say No”, which ran between 2002 and 2004 and achieved over a billion contacts with young people throughout the EU (see [IP/04/1284](#)). The “HELP” campaign consists of a roadshow and public relations campaign, an advertising campaign and a web site with help on how to quit. A European Tobacco Media Observatory will systematically collect and analyse European anti-tobacco communications in the media.

The “HELP” campaign has been devised by a consortium of health experts and media companies. The media companies delivering the campaign are working in partnership with the NGOs and public health bodies brought together by the European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP). They have developed their strategy with input from an expert advisory board chaired by Professor Gerard Hastings of Centre for Tobacco Control Research at the University of Stirling. The consortium won the contract to deliver the new EU campaign following an open call for tender that was run by the Commission in 2004.

Further information

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/Tobacco/help_en.htm,

http://europa.eu.int/comm/mediatheque/photo/index_en.html

and

<http://www.help-eu.com>

See also [MEMO/05/69](#) for more information on the EU’s action on tobacco control.