



**EUROPEAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION SMOKING OR HEALTH
(EMASH)**

**ASSOCIATION MEDICALE EUROPEENNE TABAC OU SANTE
(AMETOS)**

Honorary President: Roberto Masironi (Geneva): rmasironi@gmail.com

Honorary Vice-Presidents: Laura Ciaffei (Geneva), Luisa Costa (Coimbra),
Michael Kunze (Vienna), Florin Mihaltan (Bucharest), Lars Ramström (Stockholm)

Founder: Paul Fréour (Bordeaux)

Website: www.hon.ch/emash

Editor: Laura Ciaffei

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EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

As you remember (see EMASH Newsletter N° 88) Dr. Peruga, Chief, TFI, has left WHO at the beginning of this year. Now a new Programme Manager has come. His name is Prasad, Dr Vinayak Mohan. At present, Dr Prasad is involved in the preparation of the next COP7(see below). He kindly proposed to meet us after such event. The interview with him will be reported in the next issue. WHO appointed Bloomberg as an Finally, WHO assisted the Government of Uruguay in his trial against a tobacco firm from Switzerland. (see below). As usual, any contribution from our members is highly appreciated.

Laura

NEWS FROM WHO

Michael R. Bloomberg Becomes WHO Global Ambassador for
Noncommunicable Diseases

17 August, 2016, Geneva - WHO has today named Mr Michael R. Bloomberg, philanthropist and former three-term Mayor of the City of New York, as Global Ambassador for Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs).

NCDs are responsible for 43 million deaths each year - almost 80% of all deaths worldwide. prevention. "Michael Bloomberg is a valued partner and has a long track record of supporting WHO in the areas of tobacco control, improving data for health, road safety and drowning prevention," said Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General. "I am therefore absolutely delighted to be able to appoint him as Global Ambassador for Noncommunicable Diseases. This will enable us to strengthen our response together to the major public health challenges of NCDs and injuries." Through this work, Mr Bloomberg and WHO will be supporting the attainment of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). strengthening implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Mr. Bloomberg's role and activities will extend the reach of WHO's work to reduce exposure to the main NCD risk factors among which tobacco use. Effective strategies to prevent NCDs include increasing the tax and price of tobacco and alcohol, enforcing smoke-free environments, implementing large graphic tobacco health warnings, enforcing bans in tobacco advertisement, promotion and sponsorships, promoting the availability of healthy, affordable diets, and discouraging the consumption of foods and beverages high in sugars, salt and fat, enforcing laws on smoke alarms.

Note

The philanthropic investments in public health include a \$600 million initiative to reduce global tobacco use.

FUTURE EVENTS

The next COP7, (FCTC) will take place in Noida, India, from 7 to 12 November.

Kuwait, State of Kuwait, will host the Global Anti-Smoking International Alliance Conference from 14 to 16 December.

NEWS FROM COUNTRIES

Ireland

Plain packaging on cigarettes and tobacco due in May 2017

Plain packaging on cigarette and tobacco products will come into effect in Ireland in May next year, Minister for Health Simon Harris has confirmed to press.

The Government has been adamant it will introduce plain packaging despite threats from the tobacco industry of legal action and the loss of 87 jobs in Mullingar following the decision to close the Imperial Tobacco manufacturing plant.

Health warnings with graphic images of the consequences of smoking will feature predominantly on packaging.

The Bill amends six sections of the Public Health (Standardised Packaging of Tobacco) Act 2015 relating to the regulation of the appearance of tobacco packaging.

Sale of cigarettes from vending machines set to be banned

Mr Harris said the regulation of the appearance of tobacco packaging is aimed at improving public health by reducing the appeal of tobacco products to consumers, and increasing the effectiveness of health warnings on the retail packaging of tobacco products.

It will also reduce the ability of the packaging of tobacco products to mislead consumers about the harmful effects of smoking, the Minister said.

The Bill will allow the Minister prescribe “the colour of the outer and inner surfaces of tobacco packaging, the form and manner of barcodes and the manner in which a name may be printed on tobacco products”.

Poland

Poland bans sale of e-cigarettes to minors

Poland will ban the sale of popular e-cigarettes to minors and their use in public spaces under a recent law.

Adopted by parliament in July, the new measures put e-cigarettes on a par with their traditional tobacco-based counterparts, making it illegal to sell them to anyone under 18 years of age or "vape" anywhere that smoking is banned.

The new law also prohibits advertising e-cigarettes, their sale over the internet or from vending machines.

An estimated 1.5 million people use e-cigarettes in Poland, an EU state of 38 million people, making sales in the sector worth some 115 million euros (\$129 million) per year.

The United States and several European countries, including Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Lithuania, have already banned e-cigarettes in enclosed public places.

Spain

Are there passive smoking risks from e-cigarettes?

As electronic or e-cigarettes grow in popularity, scientists are racing to find out how they affect health, not just of users but for those around them. Although e-cigarettes – battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine and flavourings to users – don't contain tobacco, their emissions do contain nicotine, benzene and other carcinogenic compounds, according to Dr Esteve Fernández of the University of Barcelona, Catalan Institute of Oncology, Spain.

Dr Fernández is running the EU-funded TackSHS project which aims to find out more about the effects of second-hand emissions – whether from e-cigarettes or traditional cigarettes – on people's health, taking into account differences in lifestyles, economic conditions and levels of legislation.

'Electronic cigarettes don't produce combustion of tobacco – in fact they don't even contain tobacco,' he said. 'But because most users use charges containing nicotine they do produce tobacco-specific nitrosamines which are carcinogenic. 'In previous studies researchers have tried to study e-cigarettes as traditional cigarettes, but this is an error'. Dr Fernandez said 'the emissions from e-cigarettes not only contain different compounds to traditional cigarettes, but they may also be absorbed differently'.

Switzerland

1. International tribunal upholds states' rights to protect health through tobacco control

Geneva 12 July 2016. An international tribunal has upheld the sovereign authority of states to protect health through tobacco control. The World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) has confirmed that tobacco control measures applied by the Government of Uruguay did not violate the terms of an investment agreement between Uruguay and Switzerland, under which the dispute was initiated.

The decision was informed by a joint submission or amicus brief, from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) Secretariat.

2. Money more than doctors are effective in making smokers stop!

Another study in Switzerland showed that financial remuneration is more effective than doctor's advice, nicotine patch and other approaches so far in use. This is particularly true among low income smokers. During 18 months 800 volunteers were tested. Half of them received up to the equivalent of €1500 in shopping bonuses (not good for alcohol and of course tobacco) while the other half received nothing. Well, 9.5% among those who received financial support stopped smoking while only 3.7% of the non-receivers succeeded in stopping.

Of course all participants have been tested for their cotinine levels to confirm their abstinence. According to Prof JF Etter of the Geneva University Medical School, the difference between success and lack of it (5.8%) is small at individual level but is of great influence on public health level. The problem is: The approach is rather expensive and where would the money come from? According to Dr JP Humair, Director of CIPRET Geneva, it could come from tobacco taxes. Well, it is an innovative approach. The future will tell whether it is effective on the long term.

UK

Smoking rate hits low in England

The number of people smoking in England has hit the lowest levels on record, according to Public Health England (PHE) figures. “The government must make good on its promise of an ambitious new tobacco strategy, and provide sustainable funding to deliver it.”

In 2015, smoking levels decreased to 16.9% in England, PHE’s Annual Population Survey (APS) shows. This is down from 17.8% in 2014.

Alison Cox, Cancer Research UK’s director of prevention, said: “Smoking is still the biggest preventable cause of cancer, so it’s good to see that smoking rates are at a record low. “But today’s data shows large regional variations that reflect health inequalities between the richest and poorest in England. “The NHS has said that its future sustainability relies on an upgrade in public health and preventing disease, but a reduction in the number of people smoking won’t happen on its own. We need well-funded tools to help smokers to quit, like local stop-smoking services, but cuts to public health budgets are making it harder for smokers to get this support. “The government must make good on its promise of an ambitious new tobacco strategy, and provide sustainable funding to deliver it.”

Regionally, smoking prevalence is higher than the England average in the East Midlands (18%), North East (18.7%), North West (18.6%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (18.6%). Smoking rates among those in routine and manual occupations still remain stubbornly high, although they have decreased to 26.5% from 28% the previous year. The figures also show a clear connection between potential years of life lost due to smoking-related illnesses and deprivation. People are almost more than twice as likely to die early from smoking-related diseases in the poorest areas compared to the wealthiest. And it seems fewer people are successfully setting a date to quit, with the number setting a ‘quit date’ dropping to 5,549 per 100,000 people. Particularly

worrying is the figure for Yorkshire and the Humber (4,102 per 100,000 people) as this area has a very high prevalence of smokers.

United Arab Emirates, Dubai, 19 April 2016 The Anti-Smoking International Alliance -ASIA organized a seminar in Dubai aiming to spread awareness about the harmful effects of smoking and helping community to follow the required steps to quit. Fifteen speakers from 10 countries from different health, academic and educational backgrounds came to share their experiences and knowledge with the audience yesterday. The seminar covered a number of interesting topics about this unhealthy habit and the consequences on individuals health and the people around him. The seminar was held under the motto: Together we combat smoking for our generation & the next generations.

Dr. Abdul Salam Al Madani, Chairman of the ASIA welcomed all members and speakers to the seminar, and explained: imposing strict rules and regulations is not the only approach to eliminate this unhealthy habit, we should also join our efforts to spread awareness and educate the society about the consequences of smoking. We really need to educate families, schools and universities and include this topic in the school curriculum in order to raise a healthy generation that is aware of the negative outcomes of smoking.. Prof. Tawfik Khoja, Director General, Executive Board, Health Ministers Council for Cooperation Council States emphasized on joining efforts in all GCC and Arab countries in order to combat smoking.. He said in his speech: together we can make a difference, not only to our generation but to the generations to come. We should join our efforts to adopt several approaches and initiatives and apply them on all GCC countries. In 1979, we started a mission to combat smoking in the GCC. The mission was very successful and we issued more than 45 regulations on a ministry level since then. We also need to start banning ads that promote cigarettes and also ban sponsorships for games and competitions. At the end of the seminar, speakers and members agreed unanimously on a number of recommendations for this year that focuses on spreading awareness among community and educate them about the bad outcome of smoking. The members also focused on banning the e-cigarettes and try to stop all advertisements that promote them.

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various published sources including the WHO tobacco website, the International Network Towards Smoke-free Hospitals (now renamed Anti-Smoking International Alliance/www.antismoking.ae), personal contributions, scientific articles, newspapers etc. These sources are also gratefully acknowledged