

*Letter dated:*  
8 August 2007

*From:*  
Ingo Rasch  
Markusstrasse 46  
45699 Herten/Westphalen  
Telephone/Fax/Anrufbeantworter:02366/34811  
Email: ingo.rasch@stadt.wuppertal.de

**Subject: Green Paper on a smoke-free Europe**

Dear Commissioner,

I read in the press that some days ago you presented the “Green Paper towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke: policy options at EU level”.

I have been a contented smoker for decades now and will not allow myself to be criminalised by you. Social relations between smokers and non-smokers require tolerance – not exposure to the regulatory obsession of Brussels bureaucrats.

For many decades this principle of tolerance worked well, precisely because there was no government interference. Just because some politicians obviously don't know how to enjoy themselves (or wish to distract our attention from more pressing problems), they want to outlaw my own creature comforts.

How far do we have to go? What are you going to ban next? A glass of wine or beer? Single malt? Chocolate? Jelly beans? Frankish Bratwurst? Polish dumplings? It is people like you who have long extinguished my enthusiasm for Europe.

I emphatically protest against the planned smoking ban. I am for tolerance and not discrimination against smokers. We must put an end to these inordinate smoking restrictions! To boot, I consider the high taxes added to the government's coffers to be unfair.

Having enjoyed smoking for decades (cigarillo, pipe, an occasional cigar), and following in the footsteps of my grandfather (a smoker until the age of 94), my healthy 75-year old uncle, and my father (smoker, 85 years old, healthy), I categorically protest against this witch-hunt and the defamation of all smokers as sick, addicted citizens who deserve to be prosecuted. Although I am fully aware of the needs of children and other sensitive groups — and know how to defer my enjoyment when the situation so demands — I am adamantly opposed to a rigid smoking ban which greatly impoverishes my quality of life and my self-realisation. Here there can be no talk of legal proportionality.

Europe-wide moves to switch to lignite-fired power plants, to put the expansion of nuclear power on the agenda, to promote the genetic manipulation of foodstuffs and field crops (just to mention some of the life-threatening plans) show just how absurd and out of sync things are. We are now clearly at the point where politics becomes schizophrenia.

I am in favour of a European policy for the European population, and also for the protection of minority interests. But I repudiate policies that pander to the goody goodies and lobbyists on a populist wave.

Adopt a more humane scale of values, and allow me my pleasures!

I would appreciate a reply.

Sincerely,

Ingo Rasch

This paper represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumer Protection DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.