My replies were:

1) Which of the two approaches suggested in Section IV would be more desirable in terms of its scope for smoke-free initiative: a total ban on smoking in all enclosed public spaces and workplaces or a ban with exemptions granted to selected categories of venues? Please indicate the reason(s) for your choice.

A: I think that a total ban in public spaces and workplaces would be preferable.

Starting with the most important reason: it is more effective for reducing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, and it will also bring about a more sizeable fall in the number of smokers, who will give up smoking because of or with the help of the ban.

This policy would make it possible for everyone to breathe air free from the health hazards caused by tobacco in all of the public spaces they visit, and the illnesses and deaths caused by exposure to tobacco smoke would thus be reduced. And it is clear that this must be an objective as important as the use of safety belts in cars, since they perform the same role: saving lives at no cost.

Moreover, in the same way as we protect the safety of building workers, who are required to wear hard hats to avoid being killed in an accident, should we not also protect waiters in bars to prevent them from contracting lung cancer or any of the countless illnesses caused by smoking?

However, a partial ban would not obtain such positive results in terms of reducing public health problems, since fewer people would give up smoking and more would continue, as studies have shown.

Furthermore, with a partial ban there would be certain areas where there would be exposure to ETS, and if – as is often the case – a group of persons are not aware of the potential hazards of such exposure and there is one smoker in the group, they will certainly end up in a separate smoking area (where, despite good ventilation, there is significant exposure to ETS). And finally, there should be no workers in these spaces, since workers should be protected (much like a labourer who is required to wear a hard hat.) But in this case I don't know who would wait on tables in a bar, or who would clean the floor and clear the tables afterwards...

For all of these reasons I would choose a total ban over a partial ban. However, a partial ban is clearly much better than nothing; and if all the countries cannot reach an agreement, perhaps the only solution is to take the worse of the two options, a partial ban.

2) Which of the policy options described in Section V would be the most desirable and appropriate for promoting smoke-free environments? What form of EU intervention do you consider necessary to achieve the smoke-free objectives?

A: I think that the EU intervention should be based on binding legislation.

It might be the most difficult option to realise, but I also think it is the best, since it would oblige the States to take certain measures that have not been taken in some or have been "half-taken" in others (such as Spain). There should also be a requirement for legal action to be taken against infringements, which is likewise not currently done in Spain.

Other methods – such as maintaining the status quo or voluntary measures - would not, in my opinion, produce positive results. Perhaps a Commission or Council Recommendation, for regulation by the Member States, might also be acceptable – albeit, as I see it, to a much lesser extent. However, I think it would have almost no effect, since many countries would take few measures or none at all.

3) Are there any further quantitative or qualitative data on the health, social or economic impact of smoke-free policies which should be taken into account?

A: I think there are already sufficient data, and not only European (but also from the US, for example) indicating that the most effective measures are the most restrictive ones.

4) Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the Green Paper?

A: Yes, particularly concerning publicity campaigns and how research and data reach the population.

I think that there is a great deal of information on how harmful smoking is: the problem is that this information is not getting through to the people, or at least not to the vast majority. Take as an example people who do not smoke and know that smoking is bad, who are nonetheless not aware of

just how harmful it is, and tend to agree to stay in areas that are full of tobacco smoke just because they are in the company of a smoker.

I think that the Green Paper should include a section on something that should not be forgotten (although more effective measures are being implemented, such as those mentioned in questions 1 and 2): publicity. Given that today's publicity campaigns are not very effective, I think they should be more hard-hitting, and rather than just saying that it is bad and giving a fact, they should explain to people what this means: both explaining the deaths it causes and how difficult life is for sufferers of one of these illnesses, and showing people what smoking-related illnesses are really like (for instance, showing the tar-filled lung of a smoker, including its cancer). In other words, campaigns must tell people how harmful smoking is, and in a more effective way, since a poster saying "smoking kills" does not reach people – but saying that many more people are killed by smoking than by road accidents, showing the lung of a sick smoker who died of lung cancer, showing images of a smoker's almost obstructed artery and the like are more effective than a fact, as impressive as it may be (such as, for example, the fact that the etiological fraction, or proportion of deaths of smokers that can be attributed to smoking among male lung cancer sufferers is 89%).

I think the publicity campaign must be much harder-hitting, to show more people how harmful smoking is for their own health and for those around them: their friends, family, colleagues, etc. And I think that the anti-smoking campaign by the European Union must be much harder-hitting, and that it should also suggest to those States that create their own campaigns that these should also be harder-hitting, reach out more to the population, and strike a nerve.