

I live in Ireland, where the first real smoking ban was introduced. It is generally accepted that the ban has overwhelming public support here - which has grown since the ban came into being - and I have yet to meet someone who believes otherwise. A facet of the ban is that smoke odours have become much more intrusive and obvious now when we travel abroad and enter restaurants/bars with smokers present. Likewise, when a smoker sits next to you on a train/bus or whatever, the stale smoke odour - which previously was lightly noticed - is now very unpleasantly strong. There was talk before the ban and when it was first introduced that it couldn't last in a country like Ireland but now the prospect of it going is totally inconceivable and no longer talked about, even by the most hardened smokers.

Answers to questions:

(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 total ban is undoubtedly the correct answer. Our experience in Ireland shows it is absolutely clear-cut in terms of enforcement and avoids all sort of difficulties and arguable situations. From the point of view of police, legislators and even the public it means no discriminatory or challengeable situations arise and everyone knows where they stand. Our experience also shows that establishments rise to the occasion and make external arrangements for determined smokers as comfortable (and heated) as possible.

(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?

Binding legislation is really the right way forward, with Community co-ordination a (very poor) second choice. The other options aren't worth consideration and will result in no improvement.

The legislation should really target all public arenas even if the timescale is longer and not just workplaces but the latter could be a fallback. It is very clear from existing trends and the strengthening of opinions over time that any weak solution will only end up as a stop-gap measure and will lead to more calls for action in due course.

(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?

From a qualitative point of view it should be clear from any studies you undertake that social opinion in Ireland and other countries with bans are very strongly supportive of the results achieved. This is not a measure of optimistic opinion before action but one of actual results.

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

Only that its existence is a good result for the Commission, which has come under attack for many of its undertakings. This is one whose beneficial effect on Community health and social and environmental quality will become unchallenged, despite some present doubts in countries that are heavily influenced by tobacco.

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