

Hello!

I have been thinking about your questions for a while and my answers, or rather my thoughts, are set out below:

1) As I see it, it is not practical from an economic and competition point of view to make exceptions for certain defined categories of premises, e.g. sealed-off and ventilated smoking rooms. The costs for really small stakeholders could be so great if such a trend were to be followed that they could be driven out of business. It could also be hard to keep smoke and the smell of smoke away from the other parts of hospitality establishments, for example. In such cases I could imagine a solution resembling a sluice gate, similar to those found at nuclear installations, although this would probably cost a lot of money. For these reasons, I do not believe in making exceptions to a total smoking ban in enclosed public places.

I would therefore recommend the introduction of a total ban on smoking tobacco in all enclosed public spaces and at workplaces in the EU. A number of countries, including Sweden, have now introduced a more or less comprehensive ban on smoking, and the feared reduction in employment for operators in the hospitality industry has failed to materialise. In fact, rather the opposite has happened — in some cases employment has even increased since the introduction of the smoking ban. Staff working in pubs and other such premises can testify that their working environment has improved significantly since the smoking ban was introduced.

It is even the case that a total smoking ban as referred to in Section IV could reduce the number of smokers. I therefore believe that the measures you mention in the proposal will lead to clear health gains and reduced expenditure on the healthcare that is necessary to combat the harmful effects of tobacco.

2) In my view, it would be best to push for binding legislative measures in this field as far as this is possible, i.e. option 5. However, I can imagine that policy option 4 could be used first. If it were to become clear in the meantime that some Member States were lagging behind with the introduction of a total smoking ban in enclosed public spaces and that Commission or Council recommendations were being ignored, legislation would then be required as recommended in option 5.

One possible route to take would be that set out in option 5 “Binding legislation”, including revising existing Directives and bringing environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) under the scope of Directive 2004/37/EC. However, the option I find the most appealing is the last one, according to which ETS would quite simply be classified as a carcinogen (Directive 67/548/EEC). This would achieve a smoke-free environment in all enclosed public spaces, not just in workplaces as would be the case with the first two options. As mentioned in the last paragraph on page 20, it is possible in the Community to adopt measures whose nature would be non-binding in order to achieve the stated aim of protecting people from being exposed to tobacco smoke. This should be encouraged even if option 5 becomes a reality.

3) I touched on this in the first point, in that a total ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces and workplaces in the EU would lead to economic benefits not just for the individual but also for the national economy as a whole. Smoking-related costs in the healthcare sector would fall and more

people would be able to continue working for longer rather than taking early retirement as a result of the harmful effects of smoking. As I see it, it is essential to reduce tobacco consumption. Far too many young women are beginning to smoke, and experience shows that the risk of tobacco-related diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer, will increase in this group in the future unless action is taken. If the opportunities to smoke in public spaces are reduced, as targeted in your proposal, the cigarette will no longer be the natural part of everyday life that it has been.

4) If the legislative route is taken, we must reckon with it taking time. However, the gains of introducing a total smoking ban, which I advocate, are a strong argument for taking real action if we wish to see the Lisbon Strategy realised. Growth and health go hand in hand, and it is important to remember that.

If we do this, more people will be able to continue working for longer, and we will all benefit from that in the form of better and higher growth, which is one of the most important future goals for the Union. Another important issue that must not be forgotten is the demographic structure of the Member States. Ever growing numbers of pensioners will need to be provided for by ever fewer people in employment. We cannot afford to let, in this case, tobacco have such a negative impact on health as it actually has.

It is also useful to analyse the various alternatives that exist for attaining the goal of smoke-free public spaces. One method need not exclude the other, and vice versa.

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