

E.S.T.o.C.

European Smokeless Tobacco Council
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EU Commission
Attn. Commissioner D. Byrne

Vilvoorde October 14, 2004

Dear Sir,

The European Smokeless Tobacco Council (ESTOC) would like to take the opportunity to thank for the invitation by Commissioner Byrne and to provide its views for the Commission's initiative on Good Health For All.

As a representative of European smokeless tobacco companies, ESTOC believes the European tobacco consumers would greatly benefit from an improved tobacco policy. It is true that the current EU regulations on smokeless tobacco recognize the lesser damage to health produced by smokeless tobacco compared to smoking tobacco, which is also communicated to consumers through less strict requirements on labelling. Yet we feel that consumers would benefit from a better regulatory framework which would set out clear definitions for smokeless tobacco and remove the existing arbitrary ban on certain smokeless tobacco products.

The current Directive on Labelling of Tobacco products 2001/37 EC provides a very unclear definition of smokeless tobacco products which confuses both producers, national authorities and consumers. The same Directive also prevents certain smokeless tobacco products from being placed on the market while allowing selling of other clearly more hazardous smokeless tobacco products, originating from countries outside Europe as well as all kinds of smoking tobaccos. In Sweden where the banned products are allowed, what has been known as the Swedish Experience, shows significantly lower smoking rates as well as lower incidents of all tobacco related deceases. In other words, there is no scientific justification for the current restrictions - and the ban of certain smokeless tobacco products does not contribute to the overall social objective of reducing tobacco related harm and decease.

Ideally, a regulatory framework should enable consumers' access to those products that are less hazardous than many of those products currently available on the market.

We believe our smokeless products:

1. are scientifically stated to be less harmful than smoking tobacco
2. provide a real potential to reduce tobacco related diseases
3. deserve to be treated objectively in view of other smoking tobacco products
4. should be available to consumers based on their proven impacts on health relative to smoking tobacco.

We all have a shared responsibility to ensure harm is reduced. Consumers need to be able to make sound choices. The current tobacco regulations do not provide for this. We therefore urge the Commission to evaluate scientific evidence for all products and especially those potentially less harmful than others, to use these findings and existing knowledge on technical standards for setting up a new regulatory framework for tobacco.

Yours sincerely,

Sture Lindmark
Chairman
European Smokeless Tobacco Council

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