



Brussels, 6 March 2012

**MINUTES OF COMMISSIONER DALLI'S MEETING WITH HEALTH NGOS ON 29 FEBRUARY
2012**

Participants:

**Commissioner John Dalli, Paula Duarte Gaspar and Frederic Vincent
(CAB Dalli)**

**Martin Seychell (moderator), Andrzej Rys, Dominik Schnichels, Antti
Maunu, Anna-Eva Ampélas and Katja Bromen (DG SANCO)**

**Florence Berteletti (Smoke Free Partnership), Archie Turnbull (European
Public Health Alliance), Susanne Logstrup (European Heart Network),
Jean King (Cancer Research UK), Luk Joossens (Association of European
Cancer Leagues), Marc Decramer (European Respiratory Society)**

The main objective of the meeting was to listen to the concerns and/or comments from NGOs active in health as regards the on-going revision of the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD).

Commissioner Dalli described the need for revising the TPD and spoke in favour of strong and effective tobacco control policy in order to reduce tobacco consumption. He informed the participants that he is also planning to meet with tobacco industry as it is important to listen to all stakeholders concerned by the revision.

The participants argued for a strong and ambitious proposal and offered their support in the forthcoming process. They expressed understanding for the Commissioner's planned meeting with the tobacco industry.

1. Scope

- The participants spoke in favour of keeping the ban on oral tobacco (snus) and extend the ban to other smokeless tobacco products (chewing and nasal tobacco). However, they suggested a possibility for Member States to ask for derogations from the ban to take into consideration the use of chewing tobacco among certain ethnic groups.
- The participants were in favour of including herbal products for smoking in the scope of the TPD.
- The participants expressed concerns that many of the nicotine containing products, in particular electronic cigarettes, are not subject to any specific safety rules. They

did not wish to include these products in the TPD, but rather regulate them similarly to pharmaceuticals.

2. Attractiveness

- The participants stressed that the area of packaging and labelling is the most important area for the revision.
- They spoke strongly in favour of plain packaging and explained that discussions on this are already on-going in some Member States. A reference was also made to the latest Eurobarometer (published May 2010), indicating that 54% of citizens support plain packaging. As regards illicit trade, the participants refuted the claim often made by industry that plain packaging would facilitate counterfeiting of cigarettes and argued that security features would be a better countermeasure against counterfeiting.
- The participants argued that pictorial health warnings are more effective than text warnings. They spoke in favour of mandatory pictorial warnings of at least 80% on both sides of the package.
- The participants were in favour of replacing the current display of tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide (TNCO) levels with descriptive information and adding quit-line numbers on the packs. In this regard, it was described that calls to the Belgian quit-line had increased with 66% after including a quit-line number on the packages.
- As regards ingredients, the participants spoke in favour of banning certain flavours and sweeteners which would affect the palatability and make tobacco products more appealing for young people.
- It was stressed that this can be done without impacting negatively on growers of certain varieties, including Burley tobacco.

3. Access

- The participants expressed support for stronger actions in the area of access, including tobacco vending machines, tobacco promotion and display at point of sale and cross-border distance sale of tobacco. It was underlined that an EU-wide action should not prevent Member States from keeping or adopting stricter measures.

At the end of the meeting the NGOs referred to tobacco as one of the main risk factors for non-communicable disease (NCD). In this context, it was mentioned that 1/3 of the population of Europe suffer from non-communicable disease (NCD), that NCD account for 86% of deaths in the WHO European Region and that it is estimated that NCD will cost global economy \$47 trillion by 2030.

The Commissioner thanked the NGOs for the open exchange.