



**European Medical Association on Smoking or Health
Association Médicale Européenne Tabac ou Santé
EMASH-AMETOS**

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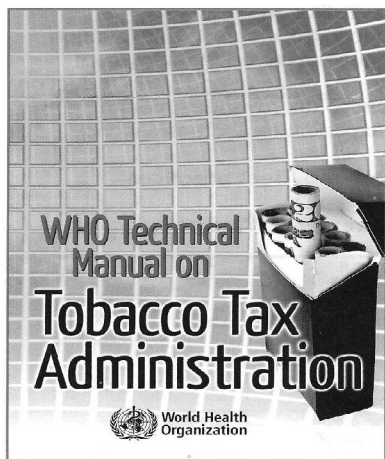
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Dear readers, most of you have gone to well deserved vacations and now are back to normal activities. The following news is what has happened during the last few months. Many of you know some of the news already, but it is hoped that there is still something here that would interest you. Have good reading. *RM*

A new WHO book



**WHO Technical
Manual on
Tobacco Tax
Administration**



2010, v + 129 pages [E]
ISBN 978 92 4 156399 4
CHF/US\$ 30.00

News from WHO

FCTC: Issue N° 6 of the Convention Newsletter has been published in June. It contains the latest details on the FCTC Status and activities.

EURO: A regional workshop on implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, organized jointly by the Convention Secretariat and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, was held in Bucharest, Romania, on 7–9 June 2010. Representatives of FCTC Parties in the Region discussed the status of implementation of the Convention, recent developments and achievements, and the challenges they are facing. Particular emphasis was given to Articles 5.3 and 11 of the Convention and the guidelines for implementation of these provisions.

WHO/EURO: During an official visit to Turkey the Regional Director for Europe Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab launched the latest report on tobacco use among adults in the European Region. The report covers the first nationally representative household survey that enables countries to collect data on adult tobacco consumption and on key tobacco control measures using standardized methods.

From UN/ECOSOC: On 23 July 2010, the United Nations Economic and Social Council unanimously adopted a resolution on tobacco use and maternal and child health. The resolution recognizes the harms of tobacco use on women and children and urges Member States to "include tobacco control in their efforts to improve public health, including maternal and child health, and reduce child mortality, through protecting children and pregnant women from tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke". The resolution may be viewed at:

http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_interaction/un_taskforce/E...

(Timothy O'Leary from WHO/TFI)

CNN interview with Judith Mackay

I am sure many of the readers have seen this TV interview in Globalink. It is at <http://edition.cnn.com/ASIA/talkasia>. It is a very interesting review of Judith's action against smoking over several decades in China and in other Asian countries. I remember when I first met Judith in the early 70s in Hong Kong. I was going to China but was told not to talk against smoking as at the time China leader Mao Tze Tung was a heavy smoker. Now, great strides have been made in China to reduce smoking, and Judith has played a relevant role. There are still lots of people smoking in China due to the population increase, but the message is going through. *(RM)*

Letter to the Editor: Austria, and several other countries in central Europe including the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary and Poland would need help from the EU through a directive on smoke-free workplaces including the hospitality business. The majority of the Austrian population would welcome this regulation, but the tobacco industry influences key persons in the government and chamber of commerce. National reports to FCTC are written by officials who are loyal to ministerial circles. Recently our minister of health defended the position of the tobacco industry, forcing innkeepers to build ineffective separations and to accept alibi controls. The minister also supported the weak law with new data on satisfaction, which are contradictory to results of independent research. Innkeepers fear loss of smoking guests to smoking restaurants which are smaller than 80m². The smoking sections in larger premises are mainly ineffective (no complete separation, internal doors always open, no separate ventilation). Employees are not protected (except for pregnant women). Children have free access to smoking rooms. The advertising for smoking restaurants has even increased, as a green sign outside the door invites clients to enter. No control is foreseen until a victim complains, but follow up of complaints is left at the discretion of local authorities without any extra personnel and without central documentation. The backbone of this strategy seems to be corruption, financed by the tobacco industry. It is however, hoped that the EU

will issue directives to protect all workplaces and thereby also the health of consumers and of the hospitality workers. If FCTC is to be promoted in Europe it is necessary to make the tobacco industry to lose its base in central Europe by enforcement of article 5.3 and 8. Best regards. *Prof. Manfred Neuberger, Vienna Medical University.*

Odds and ends in countries (L. Claffel)

Switzerland: Well done again, Pascal ! – OxyRomandie president Pascal Diethelm informs us that Swiss Indoors AG, organizer of the Davidoff Swiss Indoors tennis tournament, and the Oettinger Davidoff Group, its sponsor, have reached a joint decision to allow the title sponsorship of the event to expire after this year's tournament. Pascal says: "This is a great victory for OxyRomandie, after the efforts it has deployed over the last three years". The decision that the tournament would no longer be marketed in Europe under its previous name due to advertising restrictions in the tobacco industry results directly from the pressure OxyRomandie has put on the world tennis organization (based in the UK), through its sister organizations in the United Kingdom, *ASH England* and *ASH Scotland*, and in France in collaboration with the National committee against tobacco use (CNCT). Details are in Globalink. See also EMASH Newsletter N°65.

In Italy, 22% of young people smoke. Some start at 12 years of age. Some teenagers already smoke one pack a day. A new educational approach was thus launched in the way of a TV spot run by a well known comedian jokingly acting like a school teacher and addressing children. Instead of the gory and menacing visual messages now appearing on cigarette packets, the comic schoolteacher teaches kids how to say to their parents in a childish but convincing way that "Smoking kills". The approach seems to work as kids do tell parents that smoking kills. It is hoped that besides the parents the kids themselves will become convinced and will avoid smoking as they grow up. *In the lighter summer vein:* some Italian farmers are now trying to revive old plant cultivars of ancient origin and bring them into commerce again. One of these obsolete plants is a fruit, a peach, a variety of *prunus persica*, which used to grow in Sicily long ago, and can now be found in food supermarkets. It is tasty and it is characterized by a funny flat shape much smaller than a normal peach. It almost looks like a snuff box, whence its name: "Snuff-box"-shaped peach. This is the only good thing that can be said about tobacco.



The "snuff-box"-shaped peach (right) vs a normal peach

In France, the tobacco industry lowered the price of some brands to induce people to smoke more, but the minister of health is now proposing to increase tobacco taxes to offset the price decrease. Furthermore, the minimal age when adolescents can buy tobacco products has been increased from the previous 16 years to 18 years. If in doubt, tobacco vendors are expected to ask young people for proof of age, otherwise they could be fined. The tobacco industry allegedly intends to help the government to fight contraband and other illicit tobacco trade. Such cheap counterfeit tobacco was found to contain grass, soil and other dirt which is obviously harmful to the health of the consumer.... but also obviously harmful to the economy of both the government and of the tobacco industry. Tobacco plays a controversial role in French politics as well. A Secretary of State was asked to resign when it was discovered that he used public money to buy the very expensive and numerous cigars that he used to smoke.

In Germany (Bavaria), stronger popular vote against smoking in public places: action has recently taken place to make the existing no-smoking in public places law still stricter. To a great majority, people voted to prohibit smoking in all public places, without any of the exceptions that existed before.

In Macedonia, Croatia and Cyprus no-smoking rules are now in effect also in restaurants, coffee shops and bars, but in **Poland** only hospitals, schools, workplaces and small restaurants are no-smoking

***Acknowledgements:** Written contributions by tobacco-and-health experts are welcome, with the proviso that their personal views do not necessarily reflect EMASH views. The news contained in this Newsletter are excerpts from various published sources including the WHO/TFI website, Globalink, the International Network towards Smoke-free Hospitals, newspapers etc. These sources are gratefully acknowledged.*

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