

## Transcript Zembla 21 October 2011 Minister of Tobacco

[http://zembla.vara.nl/Afleveringen.1973.0.html?&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=50853&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=1974&cHash=b9b24f35e1713a3d41df6db263ba49ae](http://zembla.vara.nl/Afleveringen.1973.0.html?&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=50853&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=1974&cHash=b9b24f35e1713a3d41df6db263ba49ae)

First images: of Minister Edith Schippers, Minister of Health since October 2010

00:28 Voice over: Smoking is lethal, but Minister Schippers believes people should decide themselves whether to smoke or not.

00:38 Schippers allowed smoking again in some bars, decided to stop all mass media campaigns, and is against any further regulations for the tobacco industry.

00:45 Why is this her policy? How close is she and her liberal party with the smokers' lobby?

00:55 In Zembla, the real motives of this Minister of Tobacco.

00:57 on screen: "Minister of Tobacco"

01:04 statement of Minister Schippers:

"Freedom of choice also applies to life style issues. The freedom to chose your own destiny is an important fundamental right. This also applies to lifestyle. "Freedom and responsibility" is the theme of this government. The state is not a nanny.

01:21 At the factory of Imperial Tobacco, located in Joure, the Northern part of the Netherlands. You hear the voice of Alexander van Voorst Vader (AvVV), lobbyist for the tobacco industry through Vereniging Nederlandse Kerftabak (Association Dutch Leaf Tobacco – a joint effort of a.o. BAT and Imperial Tobacco). <sup>1</sup>

AvVV: She does not want to exaggerate nannyism. She calls upon people to take their own responsibility for their careful and responsible behaviour.

Reporter: So when she became Minister, you must have been very pleased.

AvVV: Well, we assumed that, as we knew her ideas when she was a Parliamentarian, that she would have the same line of careful thinking when she was a Minister.

1:35 Alem, the home of Wiel Maessen (WM), director of Forces Netherlands<sup>2</sup>, a smokers' organization. One of the board members of the foundation "Save the small bars"<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kerftabak.nl/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.forces-nl.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://kleinehoreca.info/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4> Note from Lies van Gennip: In 2009 it was discovered by another journalist from NRC, that in fact this foundation was the initiative, established and paid by the tobacco industry. When it was established, there was not a single small bar owner present. There is

1:35 WM: She used to smoke herself. I know that, but I do not think that this explains her policy. I think the basis is the classical libertarian vision that governments should not interfere with these sorts of things.

2:05 Maastricht University, Prof. Onno van Schayck, Chairman of the Public Private Partnership Stop Smoking). (OvS)

OvS: A Minister of Health is not a Minister of anti-nannyism. She is a Minister of Health and it is her duty to take responsibility for public health. And she is not doing that. That is really serious.

2:23 You now see a blond woman (BW) coming up a stairs, she has breathing difficulties. The recording is made in the Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis (hospital) in Beverwijk. This is the hospital where the pulmonologists Wanda de Kanter and Pauline Dekker work.

BW: I cannot remember to have walked so many stairs

Reporter: Actually you cannot do this anymore?

BW: No [shaking her head].

Reporter: What caused this?

BW: Smoking, a lot of smoking

Reporter: what does the doctor say about your future?

BW (now with an inhalator): the disease is progressive

Reporter: that means?

BW: that it will only get worse.

Reporter: and eventually?

BW: one ends in a wheelchair with an oxygen tank

03:19 different shot, voice over: COPD, lung cancer, cardiovascular disease. Half of all smokers die early as a result of their addiction. 25% of them die before their pension. For many years, tobacco control was one of the priorities of the Ministry of Health. This changed when Minister Schippers came into office.

03.47 Shot "Start of Government Rutte, October 2010"

03:42 Minister Schippers: "If adults decide on Friday evening to smoke together with their glass of beer in a small pub, who am I to forbid this? I think that people should be given a choice. There are plenty of alternatives for all those people that do not want this. I think the current legislation is too restrictive in this respect. "

---

strong evidence that the tobacco industry supported the legal procedures initiated by the "small bars", at least by information, and probably also financially.

03:57 Shot inside a bar: Voice over: “The smokefree law for small bars is reversed, it is one of the very first measures of the new government. “

04:06 Shot of one of the STIVORO campaigns. Voice over: “And Minister Schippers also ends this kind of TV campaigns.” More measures that are being questioned follow.

04:27 Voice over: “Professor van Schayck is member of the health council of the Netherlands and an international expert in tobacco control. He analysed what are the most effective ways to help people quit smoking.”

OvS: The average smoker needs 7 quit attempts to finally succeed to stop smoking. So quitting is very difficult. If people are helped, for example by their GP with counselling techniques, combined with pharmacological support, the chance to succeed is much higher.

04:54 voice of a patient with a box of Champix: “I take one in the morning at breakfast and one in the evening at dinner”. You see shot of a counselling session.

05:03 OvS Some years ago – under the Ministry of Els Borst (i.e. former Minister of Health, 2004) – we have done a study to analyse the impact of reimbursement of stop smoking medications. That was a huge experiment, the first worldwide. We showed that when implemented nationally, 144.000 more people would quit, if you would reimburse stop smoking medications.

05:23 voice over “This study of Prof van Schayck made the previous government decide to reimburse stop smoking programs from 2011.”

05:28 OvS We now see that many more people quit then we predicted. The actual amount was more than double what we had predicted. So we saw many more people that quit smoking because of the reimbursement.

Reporter: So this measure was very successful?

OvS: It is one of the most successful tobacco control measures in the Netherlands ever.

Reporter: and now Minister Schippers decides to stop the reimbursement?

OvS: Impossible to understand, shocking. Really shocking, I cannot find words.

05:52 Reporter: Did you explain this to the Minister?

OvS: We did explain this to the Minister. In many ways we explained this to the Minister. As alliance of medical doctors, and universities we tried to talk to her about this. We supplied her with all the evidence and materials. She was not interested to talk with us.

06:17 Voice over: Minister Schippers does not want to speak with the medical doctors. Van Schayck approaches the parliamentarians (now shot of the office of Anne Mulder, member of parliament). He hopes to find here support. However, Anne Mulder, responsible parliamentarian for health for the liberal party (VVD) is very clear. Pharmacological support for stop smoking is no longer reimbursed. The fact that it is effective is not relevant.

06:36 AM: If something is effective, this does not imply that the government is responsible for it.

Reporter: for many years, the government believed tobacco control was her responsibility.

AM: that is true, but this government feels less responsible.

Reporter: It is your turn now (NB the liberal party is now in the government after a period where they were in the opposition)

AM: you state it very directly, but this is in fact the case. Our point of view as a liberal party in parliament for many years, first expressed by Edith Schippers, than by Halbe Zijlstra and subsequently described in our elections platform, is like this. We won the elections and are now in government. Evidently, the current policy reflects that.

07:07 OvS: The point of view of Anne Mulder is ideological rather than rational.

Reporter: What is his ideology?

OvS: His ideology is that you should not “nanny”.

Reporter: A logical point of view for a liberal?

OvS: You could say it is a logical point of view for a liberal, but here you play with life and death.

07:32 Voice over: Members of parliament, tell Minister Schippers she is influenced by the lobby of the tobacco industry. However, she denies. (quote of Minister Schippers, text on screen) :

” I hardly know these people. In the many years that I have been on this dossier, I have spoken the tobacco lobby maybe twice or three times”. (quotation of Minister Schippers, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011).

Voice over: Does the Minister speak the truth? Who are the advisers of this Minister of the liberal party, Edith Schippers?

Now shot of tobacco factory, you see again Alexander van Voorst Vader smelling a tobacco leaf. Employer explains the beauty of a tobacco leave., Van Voorst Vader watches.

Voice over: The factory in Joure is the largest “roll your own tobacco” factory of Europe. Alexander Van Voorst Vader is lobbyist for the roll your own tobacco industry. He knows Edith Schippers from the moment she came into parliament for the liberal party VVD.

08:35: AvVV We got to know Minister Schippers intensively during her period as member of parliament. She is very careful.

Reporter: did you have bilateral discussions with her?

AvVV: As tobacco industry we discuss with her bilaterally

Reporter: How did you experience these discussions?

AvVV: She is very open for sensible points of view of the industry.

09:00 Voice over: So Schippers is open for sensible points of view from industry. That is not strange. Because before she went into politics, she worked for VNO NCW (NB the Dutch employers

organization). STIVORO, Centre of expertise for tobacco control, remembers her from that period as a strong opponent of the smokefree workplace. Shot of Lies van Gennip, director STIVORO:

LvG: Between 1997 and 2001, Edith Schippers was secretary of health care and employment at VNO NCW. That was in the period that the new tobacco law was discussed, which came into effect in 2002. We experienced that VNO NCW was against any regulation. Against the smokefree workplace.

Reporter: they were opposed?

LvG they were completely opposed.

Reporter: how important was VNO NCW for the tobacco industry?

LvG: Very important. In a letter of Roelofs (Stichting Sigaretten Industrie, a lobby organization for the tobacco industry) of June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999 he writes to his colleague in Europe , VNO NCW is among our allies against the new tobacco law.

Reporter: so the employers were against stricter regulations against smoking?

LvG Absolutely. Of course that is due to the fact that the tobacco industry is a member of the employers' organization VNO NCW and is very influential within this employers' organization. Minister Schippers was secretary of VNO NCW and expressed the interests of the tobacco industry.

Reporter: And then she came into parliament. Did she change her views?

LvG: Her views did not change. She continued to express the views of the tobacco industry in Parliament.

Reporter: while she was responsible for health care for her party in Parliament?

LvG: Yes, she was responsible for health care for her party in Parliament, but on this issue, she represented the interest of the tobacco industry. She was opposed to tax increases, to regulations, to anything that could reduce tobacco consumption.

10:46, shot of Wiel Maessen, Forces again, lighting a cigarette.

Voice over: A stronger supporter for smokers' interests can hardly be found. Wiel Maessen is chairman of the Netherlands branch of Forces, an international smokers' organization. How strong were his contacts with Edith Schippers, when she was parliamentarian?

WM: I had during this period frequent contact with her through email, and face-to-face meetings.

Reporter: What was your image of her?

WM: A fighter for freedom.

Voice over: Former Minister Ab Klink (AK) announced in 2007 a smokefree hospitality sector (shot: Minister Klink stepping out of a car) to protect employees and guests from the toxic effects of tobacco smoke.

AK: This was not a primary idea of the Christian Democrats (NB his own Party) but from the Christen Union (the government coalition partner at that time). However, I became convinced that it was really necessary to protect employees against the harmful effects. Moreover, it was part of the government agreement.

11:59 On the boat of Wiel Maessen, song on background sounds “shit shit shit to tobacco control, don’t do business with the government”.

Voice over: Wiel Maessen fights Minister Klink during that period. He establishes the foundation “Save the small bars” and transforms his boat into an action ship.

WM: We sailed almost the whole of Netherlands, from Friesland to Maastricht. Often people thought we were collecting signatures for the smokefree law and they did not want to sign. And then we showed our tobacco and people understood “you are anti – anti smoke” and they signed up.

12:30 shot of the manifestation in The Hague organized by the foundation “Save the small bars”. You see on screen Fleur Agema, parliamentarian for the Freedom Party, which now supports our minority government and which party is now very influential.

WM People you meet, other people sailing, we had a flag on ship with the text “stop nannyism, stop smokefree”

Voice over: Maessen tries to find allies in parliament to sabotage the smokefree law. He sends many emails. He finds support with the liberal party (VVD) and the party of freedom (PVV) – but this is insufficient for a majority. He receives mail from Edith Schippers:

13:00 text on screen:

“The vote is tonight. I do not think VVD will manage it. (We are too small in parliament for that....)  
Mail E. Schippers, 5 July 2007.

“Unfortunately I cannot join Sunday (i.e. the Manifestation in The Hague). I wish you a lot of success and even though lots of fun ;-)”

Voice over: A few days later, Schippers writes:

“I am sorry. On behalf of the VVD I did everything to keep room for choice...” Mail E. Schippers, 12 July 2007

“The anti smoke lobby has been quite strong these past years. Good luck with the action”.

Voice over: Maessen asks VVD parliamentarian and smoker (roll your own) Johan Remkes, whether he would be willing to become ambassador of his foundation. However, that is one step too much for Remkes. He does not accept this invitation.

13:45 Maessen: he said that he mentally agreed with the initiative and the foundation, but as member of parliament he could not be openly connected with an organization that aimed to fight the law in court. It was a pity, But we knew he was sympathetic to our work.

Reporter: did you experience similar sympathies from other members of the VVD as well?

WM: We even received a mail from Mark Rutte (NB at that time party leader for the VVD in parliament, now prime minister) saying that he supported our initiative and was sympathetic to it.

14:10: Ab Klink: The VVD (liberal party) was the strongest opponent of the smokefree law. And the PVV (party of the freedom), by that time smaller than they are now.

Reporter: So the VVD was the strongest opponent. Who was the most difficult for you by that time?

AK: I believe it started with Edith Schippers, but later it was Halbe Zijlstra.

Reporter: So Halbe Zijlstra was a very strong campaigner for exceptions of the smoke free law?

AK: yes he was.

14:37 Shot in Parliament, Halbe Zijlstra (HZ) speaking

HZ: Chairman, past Friday the legal court in Breda decided that the smokefree law is not according to the equality principle – you know, article 1 of our constitutional law. <sup>4</sup>

Voice over: Because Edith Schippers was assigned other duties within the parliamentarian fraction of the VVD, she transfers the topic “tobacco” to her party colleague Halbe Zijlstra. He is very receptive too for the arguments of the smokers lobby. He asks his assistant: (text on screen)

“Could you please contact Wiel Maessen? I want (..) to raise questions. Ask him whether he has any suggestions that we may add” Mail H. Zijlstra, 5 August 2008.

Voice mail: Halbe Zijlstra even presents at an international pro-smoking conference organized by Wiel Maessen. March 2010

HZ: When we talk about smoking in small pubs. We think it should be a choice. It should not be a total ban on smoking.

Voice over: The smokefree policy of Ab Klink is in danger, to the horror of many doctors and scientists because international research shows that smoke free policies result in less illness caused by environmental smoke. Wiel Maessen thinks this is rubbish.

WM: I do not deny smoking is not healthy, but so are many other things. However, we fully disagree that environmental smoke is unhealthy. We deny that smokers harm their environment. There is no scientific evidence whatsoever for this.

16:06 Reporter: some people say there is no evidence for the damage of environmental smoke. For instance people like Wiel Maessen say there is no evidence for that. They call it the “environmental smoke lie”. You start to laugh.

---

<sup>4</sup> The smokefree law for the hospitality sector was introduced 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008.

OvS: It is a lie that this is a lie. There have been tens of studies, in situations with children, in situations with people not smoking, but inhaling tobacco smoke of their partner or in their working situation. There are tens of studies that without any doubt show the relation between cardiovascular disease and environmental smoke, lung disease, COPD, Asthma and environmental smoke, and cancer and environmental smoke. Each year, many people die because they inhale tobacco smoke from others. That is not a lie. It is a lie that this is a lie.

Voice over: And then the liberal party (VVD) and the freedom party (PVV) win the elections. (June 2010). During the negotiations to establish the government, Mark Rutte is supported by Edith Schippers.

WM: During these negotiations I contacted Edith Schippers. For instance I wrote to her: I see you often as secondant of Mark Rutte. I wonder whether you talk also about the smokefree regulation?

17:25 shot of negotiation table

Voice over: Halbe Zijlstra responds to this mail on behalf of the VVD

“Dear people of foundation save the small bars.... You know what I promised, you may hold us accountable for the result. Regards, Halbe.” Mail H. Zijlstra, 30 August 2010.

WM: Halbe told me it was part of the negotiations.

Reporter: he told you that

WM: he told me that

Voice over: The result was, reversing the smokefree law for small bars. The negotiator for the Christian Democrats (Ab Klink) explains how the liberal party (VVD) and freedom party (PVV) achieved this result.

17:58 AK: you are not supposed to say something of the negotiations, but I consider this as very innocent. Geert Wilders (i.e. negotiator for the PVV) looked at me and said “I do not think you would really mind if we make an exception for small bars” Obviously I realized that the political majority was supporting this and my party colleague Maxime Verhagen (also on the negotiating table) was also not in favour of the smokefree law. At the same time at the Ministry we were looking into possibilities to allow exceptions for the small bars. So yes.

Reporter: So for VVD and PVV it was not difficult to win this one?

AK: there were indeed more difficult issues.

Shot in the room of VVD parliamentarian Anne Mulder 18:35

Reporter: the VVD worked close together with the smoke-lobby to weaken en reverse the smokefree policy.

AM: I do not know that, I was not a parliamentarian. Of course they can get their information there. It is not so that the VVD supports the tobacco industry. The VVD's policy can coincide with the



interests of industry. That is how it goes. IN our party program you will not find a picture of lucky strike. We did win the elections, but certainly not because of the tobacco industry.

19:10 OvS: If I were the tobacco industry, I would have opened bottles of champagne many times.

Voice over: Edith Schippers becomes Minister of Health in October 2010. Instead of concerning herself about the effects of the lethal and addictive tobacco, she chooses a policy that pleases the smoking lobby. How much influence has the tobacco industry in fact on Minister Schippers' policy?

Very close to parliament is the office of the Stichting Sigaretten Industrie. Willem Jan Roelofs (WJR) is for many years the leader of this influential lobby organisation for the tobacco industry.

19:53 WJR: The main message is that we are a legal industry that produces and sells tobacco products and we work for the interests of this industry within legal possibilities.

Voice mail: Each industry tries to influence its interests. They do that through lobbyists. Seen from that point, it is logical that the tobacco industry invests in good contacts with politicians. But should the government be open for such influence? How should the government address this tobacco industry influence? Florence Berteletti is an international expert in tobacco control.

FB: Well if you die of malaria, you would hardly invite the mosquito to resolve the problem at the negotiation table, are you? The problem is that the tobacco industry kills half of his long-term users.

Reporter: but it is a legal industry?

FB It is a legal but lethal industry, who is killing their consumers when they use their product as it is intended. It is a unique industry.

Voice over: Berteletti is director of the Brussels-based Smoke Free Partnership. This combines hundreds of scientists on cancer, lung disease and heart disease. Berteletti herself did studies on the strategy of the tobacco industry.

FB It is internationally recognized there is a conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health policy. If you want to resolve the tobacco problem, than you do not consult with the tobacco industry. Because their duty is to please their shareholders and to ensure that their business continues. That means that they recruit new young smokers. That is their objective.

Voice over: That is why the Netherlands signed an international treaty under the World Health Organisation. In this so called FCTC treaty is stated that the tobacco industry must not influence policy, because the interests of public health are in conflict with those of the tobacco industry. In e.g. UK or Canada, the tobacco industry is not allowed to discuss tobacco control regulation. What happens in our country?

Shot in tobacco factory again, talking with Alexander Van Voorst Vader

AvVV: If you would ask the responsible civil servants at the Ministry, at various levels, they will agree that this is a legal industry and that they should have an open eye and open ear for the tobacco industry. And they have, in word and deed. By telephone, by letter, in meetings, they are prepared to discuss with us. Most contacts we have with the people in charge of the tobacco dossiers, but we have also contacts and directors and at the directors-general level.

Reporter: So also at the highest levels

AvVV: Absolutely, we have periodic meetings and we speak also with the Director General of the Ministry of health when needed.

Voice over: So civil servants of the Ministry of health have frequent contacts with the tobacco industry. What do they discuss? Is the Parliament informed of such contacts?

22:57 shot in the room with Lea Bouwmeester, parliamentarian for the Social Democratic Party, now in opposition. (LB)

LB: they have excellent lobbyists, they invest lots of money in lobbying – that is evident. That is what you experience as a parliamentarian. They use that influence too towards the Minister and the Ministry. The problem is that we do not know how much influence they have. We do not know where they invite the civil servants, in what way the lobby is carried out.

Reporter: you are not informed of that

LB: we do not know that

Reporter: does the Minister not tell you how often she speaks with the lobbyists of the tobacco industry? Or which letters she receives?

LB I would like to receive this information, but I do not know this. ON the contrary, the Minister says she does not speak with them.

23:34 in Office Stichting Sigaretten Industrie, Willem Jan Roelofs

Reporter: But than it should not be suggested as if there are no contacts, if the Minister has many contacts with the tobacco industry?

WJR: I tell you what are my contacts with the Minister. If you want her response to that, you should ask the Minister herself.

Reporter: But isn't it right there are plenty of contacts between the tobacco industry and politics and the tobacco industry with the Ministry?

WJR: Plenty (pffff) we have normal contact. We call each other, we write each other. But I do not think it is more than necessary.

Reporter: I do not suggest it is more than necessary, I only say that the Minister says there is hardly any contact and that seems not to be true.

WJR: I do not know how the Minister interprets this – you should ask her. I cannot judge that.

Voice over: This was surely our intention so we asked the Minister how much contact there actually is between her and her civil servants with the tobacco industry and what correspondence exists. But the Ministry of Health does not want to cooperate with this documentary of Zembla. The response is (text on screen):

“The reason is that we have the impression that the tone of voice of the documentary has already been set.” (Response spokesman of Minister Schippers)

Voice over: So no transparency of the Minister’s contacts with the tobacco industry. The fact is there is very often contact. We hear that civil servants of the Ministry of Health also visit tobacco industry factories. For instance this spring.

AvVV: We had a delegation of a number of Ministries visiting one of our smaller factories. We showed them very carefully the industrial process. The delegation included the department of Health, Economic Affairs, Finances.

25:16 in office Parliamentarian Lea Bouwmeester.

Reporter: Do you think it is normal that the tobacco industry invites regularly civil servants in their factories?

LB: These industries have the right to invite them, but it is not normal that these invitations are accepting these invitations.

Reporter: why not?

LB: Because civil servants must be very careful that they are not influenced by industry interests. The interests of the tobacco industry is to have as many smokers as possible, and that is not an interest to follow as a civil servant.

JWR: Of course there are contacts. There is communication by letters, visits to our factories, symposia, - you meet the people, and you represent the interests of the industry – we exchange arguments. There is nothing wrong with that.

Reporter: there is an international treaty that says the government should not communicate with the tobacco industry. The tobacco industry should not be allowed to influence the policy.

WJR: What you now say is incorrect. The treaty says you have to be aware of the fact of the different interests. Especially regarding the tobacco industry. I just told you there are indeed other interests. That does not imply that the government is not allowed to speak with this industry.

Reporter: Government should make sure the tobacco industry does not influence the tobacco control policy.

WJR: Of course, but it is the Minister that finally decides on the policy.

Reporter: If you talk, you do that with an aim.

WJR: If I talk with the Ministry, I do that for the interests of the tobacco industry, so that the interests of the tobacco industry are considered in the decisions on the policy. That is what every industry does.

26:39 Voice over: A cigarette industry wants to sell cigarettes. But the government has a different responsibility. Government should ensure that people smoke as little as possible. This has been

agreed in the FCTC treaty of the WHO, which was also ratified by the Netherlands. The treaty also explains how you can reduce tobacco use:

26:55 Lies van Gennip

These measures have been described by the WHO, and are evidence based. First of all tax (price) increase, secondly education, on the package (graphical warnings) as well in campaigns through radio and tv, thirdly help people quit, and of course restrict marketing of the tobacco industry. The tobacco industry has now so many possibilities to market its products through the points of sale – these possibilities should be restricted.

Voice over: Of course the industry does not want these measures. The question is, to whom the government is listening. Pauline Dekker and Wanda de Kanter are both pulmonologists. Together they wrote the book “The Netherlands stops smoking”. Their priority is to make sure young people do not take up smoking. Therefore, reduce the number of points of sale of tobacco.

27:39 WdK: at every street corner you can buy cigarettes. Our point is that you should not do this visible for children, for children under 18 years. These children are not aware that they easily get addicted to tobacco. They do not even realize this.

PD: January 19<sup>th</sup> we have met Minister Schippers and we offered her a manifest, signed by many important people who are knowledgeable about this matter. We explained to her the measures that we recommended to prevent children become addicted to tobacco.

Reporter: and what did she say?

PD: She was not interested in all our facts. She said she did not like statistics. That is such a pity for a Minister of Health that should base her policy on statistical facts. The facts are that smoking kills 1 out of 4 smokers before the age of pension.

Voice over: These two doctors see that tobacco product packages are becoming much more flashy and attractive.

PD: Look at this one

WdK – look carefully at this one. Imagine you are 14-15 years old. You see such a nice pink box, almost a lipstick. You would want this in your bag wouldn't you? Glamour? I want to be glamorous! If this isn't marketing targeting sweet little girls, what is?

Voice over: The European Commission is now investigating whether such beautiful packages can be forbidden. The tobacco industry is strongly opposed to this. They say it is in conflict with brand rights. And they say, it is not effective to keep people from smoking.

Reporter: you want beautiful packages that you can sell. That is your interest?

WJR: That is the consumer's interest. The consumer wants a different package, that belongs to him. The consumer wants to be able to buy it.

Reporter: Well... the interest of the consumer is also good health. And for that it is better not to smoke. And the interest is then not to be seduced by the packages.

WJR: I do not believe that consumers are seduced by it.

Reporter: So you do not believe these packages seduce?

WJR: The issue is that consumers want to buy a product that they want.

FB: Isn't that sexy and beautiful? No wonder the tobacco industry says it does not work. They know that this works for them.

Reporter: But you make packages that you want to connect your brand with, that you want to connect with as an industry?

WJR: That is true.

Reporter: so you make attractive packages.

WJR That is true.

Reporter: It would be strange if you would say these packages have no effect. Because than you would make them brown or so.

WJR: What is wrong with an attractive package?

30:15 in the room with Anne Mulder, Parliamentarian for VVD

Reporter: Do you think stricter regulations are needed, for instance fewer points of sale, or less attractive packages?

AM: NO

Reporter: that should not happen?

AM: NO

Voice over: To make the cigarette more attractive, the industry adds substances (taste), like menthol, vanilla, cacao. The RIVM (Dutch government agency for health research) does research on tobacco ingredients.

Antoon Opperhuizen, Head of the laboratory at RIVM

30:34 AO: In most cases it is very likely that substances are added to make the product more attractive.

Reporter: For young people?

AO: For young people, because these are new customers—they do smoke not yet. The additives are very often recognized from youth. Like chocolate – you like that in childhood. We observe that the number of additives is increasing.

Voice over: in an increasing number of countries one is considering to forbid these additives. Because young people start more easily because of these additives. The tobacco industry wants to prevent the European Commission and the Dutch government from supporting such measures. Tobacco

industry lobbyist WJR explains his concerns in a letter to the Ministry and to Politicians. He writes, forbidding additives is subjective, disproportional and ineffective. Also the chairman of the employers organization VNO NCW Bernard Wientjes, has lobbied for the tobacco industry in a personal conversation with the Minister of Health – so we heard.

AvVV: The highest level of VNO NCW talked with the highest level of the Ministry (indeed the Minister) about the development of new regulations which is now in concept. Mr Wientjes said that the Minister will consider this in the same way as she did previously.

Voice over: So, what did Schippers write to parliament

32.11 text:

“I do not see the necessity to regulate or restrict the composition of tobacco products” Letter E. Schippers, 22 August 2011.

Voice over: To the tobacco industry lobbyists Van Voorst Vader and Roelofs she writes “I appreciate the intention to continue our investment in and open and constructive dialogue...”(Letter E. Schippers, 10 December 2010).

Voice over: With STIVORO there is not such a constructive dialogue. The centre of expertise on tobacco control will lose all its government financing.

LvG: This is really a mistake. This policy is wrong. We need to say that.

Voice over: A strict tobacco control policy can save lives, as is demonstrated by international research. The policy of Minister Schippers will however result in more people dying, says STIVORO. Van Gennip refers to the fact that mass media campaigns are stopped, as well as the reimbursement of pharmacological quit support.

33:05 LvG It is possible to calculate what is the impact of such decisions on smoking in the Netherlands, and based on that you can calculate how many lives it will cost.

Reporter: So you think that because of this policy, more people will die?

LvG: yes. The model calculations show that indeed.

Reporter: How many people would then die?

LvG: That would be 600 people that would die extra from now to 2020.

FB: I am ashamed on behalf of the Dutch people. While France and the UK are actively trying to make a change for their people and the status of the health in their country, the Dutch government is not wanting to do anything.

FB: Where does she get her advice from? Is she a doctor herself? That is the question. Where does she get her advice from? If you look at the policies of the tobacco industry, she follows what they want. Not what the doctors want.

OvS I find it shocking that this Minister is more concerned about nannyism than about public health. Tens of thousands of people die in the Netherlands because of smoking. The Minister does not seem to be concerned at all.

Reporter: So you do not find her to be a good Minister of Health.

OvS: absolutely not. On the contrary, I really feel it is very bad.