



Brussels, 1 June 2015

Ms Elisabetta Gardini,
Member of the European Parliament

CC: European Parliament Bureau

CC: Mr Klaus Welle, Secretary General of the European Parliament

Re: Organisation of Lunch Debate: Illicit Trade of Tobacco Products on 3 June 2015

Dear Ms Gardini,

We are writing as representatives of European and international tobacco control and public health organisations to draw to your attention our serious concerns related to your announced hosting and participation of the event “Lunch Debate: Illicit Trade of Tobacco Products”¹ on European Parliament premises in Brussels on 3 June 2015.

We urge you to withdraw your participation and hosting of this event as:

- 1) **The event violates the spirit of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.**
- 2) **The event appears to be detrimental to the dignity of Parliament.**
- 3) **The event goes against the Parliament’s ongoing work on reinforcing transparency and accountability, particularly with regard to conflicts of interests.**

Below we detail our arguments for these assertions:

- 1) **The event violates the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.**

As a member and a former coordinator of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI) you must be aware of the undue pressure the tobacco industry exerts when it comes to tobacco control policies and the recognition of this pressure by the EU and over 180 countries worldwide with the adoption of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

The European Union as a Party to the WHO FCTC **is legally bound to protect its policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry.** Recommendation 2.1 of the guidelines to Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC specifically states that **“Parties should interact with the tobacco industry only when and to the extent**

¹ <http://car-aer.eu/2015/05/21/invitation-to-the-illicit-trade-of-tobacco-products-a-problem-for-european-regions/> (agenda last accessed 28 May 2015)

strictly necessary to enable them to effectively regulate the tobacco industry and tobacco products”.²

Yet, the event you are hosting is a debate on the topic of illicit trade and will have **as guests and speakers `representative experts of tobacco associations` as well as representatives of the tobacco industry, thus giving them opportunity to table their interests and promote the unfounded argument that any tobacco control policy creates illicit trade, yet another time.**³

We consider that the organisation of a lunch debate in the European Parliament **does not represent a `strictly necessary` measure** for the effective regulation of tobacco industry and products, as the work of multiple Parliamentary Committees gives ample opportunity for the tobacco industry to make its voice heard.

2) The event contravenes Parliament’s own rules and is detrimental to the dignity of the institution.

The lunch debate is most probably in contravention of Parliament’s rules concerning the use of its premises by outside bodies⁴, particularly Article 4(d) that requests that such events not undermine the dignity of the institution.⁵ **We contend that in light of the tobacco industry’s intense activity to undermine EU legislation and learning from its undue influence on legislative processes over recent years, the Parliament’s dignity would be affected by its hosting of such an event.**

3) The event goes against the Parliament’s ongoing work on reinforcing transparency and accountability, particularly with regard to conflicts of interests.

As you are well aware, significant work is ongoing within the Parliament to reinforce its transparency and accountability towards European citizens, particularly through its work on strengthening the code of conduct for Members, the creation of an Intergroup on Integrity: Transparency, anti- corruption and organised crime, and lately the creation of a working group specifically working on counteracting the influence of the tobacco industry and implementation of the FCTC’s Article 5.3 mentioned previously.

We ask you to reconsider hosting events that promote the interests of the tobacco industry, as it sends contradicting signals regarding the Parliament’s commitment to its own legal

² [Guidelines for the Implementation of Article 5.3 of the FCTC](#) (last accessed 28 May 2015)

³ <http://car-aer.eu/2015/05/21/invitation-to-the-illicit-trade-of-tobacco-products-a-problem-for-european-regions/> (agenda last accessed 28 May 2015)

⁴ RULES GOVERNING THE USE OF PARLIAMENT’S PREMISES BY OUTSIDE BODIES BUREAU DECISION OF 14 MARCH 2000

⁵ “Events may under no circumstances have a commercial purpose and must not undermine the dignity of Parliament. Sponsorship shall be prohibited, along with any form of partnership between Parliament and a private body”.



obligations under the FCTC; and would be seen as highly discouraging when it comes to Parliament's commitment to increasing transparency and accountability.

We urge you and the Parliament's Bureau, in light of these arguments, to **withdraw the authorisation** for this lunch debate to take place in the European Parliament.

We look forward to your response and remain at your disposal for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Florence Berteletti
Director, Smoke Free Partnership

Archie Turnbull
President, Smoke Free Partnership

Deborah Arnott
Chief Executive, Action on Smoking and Health (UK)
Board Member, Smoke Free Partnership

Alison Cox
Director of Cancer Prevention, Cancer Research UK
Board Member, Smoke Free Partnership





A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susanne Logstrup".

Susanne Logstrup
Director, European Heart Network
Treasurer, Smoke Free Partnership

