



Monday, March 07, 2016

Dear MEPS,

**RE: Resolution(s) regarding the forthcoming expiry of the Philip Morris International (PMI) Agreement**

Ahead of the Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> of March vote in Plenary on the tabled Resolutions regarding the forthcoming expiry of the Philip Morris International (PMI) Agreement, we are contacting you as representatives of the health community in Europe.

**We are calling on your support for a strong Resolution which states clearly that the European Commission should NOT renew, extend or renegotiate the Agreement with Phillips Morris International (PMI) beyond its current date of expiry.**

Why?

- PMI is suing the EU over the 2014 Tobacco Products Directive, including its provisions on security and the tracking & tracing of illicit tobacco products.
- The renewal, extension or renegotiation of the agreement will send a damaging message to non-EU countries that the EU believes bilateral deals with the tobacco industry are its priority for tackling illicit trade. The outcome could be that ratification of the Illicit Trade Protocol is delayed and the fight against tobacco smuggling is put back many years.
- It is not possible to establish a direct causality between the reduction of 85% of illicit trade and the Agreement.
- The contraband consisting of smuggled products from the large transnational tobacco manufacturers like Philip Morris has been increasingly replaced by other products in particular "cheap whites" which are manufactured for the sole purpose of being smuggled into and sold illegally in another market and an extension of the agreement would not help with this.
- The renewal, extension or renegotiation of the agreement would allow the tobacco industry to retain control of tracking and tracing through Codentify when no independent assessment of the security of the system (which is an integral part of the PMI agreement) has been conducted. Without such an assessment, the EU is opting to support a "black box" system, with features and possible weaknesses that only the tobacco industry is aware of.

The Smoke Free Partnership and health organisations in Europe remain strongly committed to promoting effective measures for combating the illicit tobacco trade and we count on your support and we look forward to your vote for a Resolution that places the health of European citizens above the interests of the tobacco industry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Berteletti', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Florence Berteletti SFP Director  
on behalf of the SFP Coalition

***The SFP Coalition is a specialised network of more than 25 independent EU and national organisations with technical expertise in tobacco control policy created in 2014. Led by SFP, Coalition partners work together to promote and support smoking prevention through the development of advocacy strategies that deliver specific EU tobacco control policies as well as to promote and support smoking prevention at international, European and national level through the development and implementation of the FCTC, its protocols and guidelines.***

***EPHA is a change agent – Europe’s leading NGO advocating for better health. We are a dynamic member-led organisation, made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals, and disease groups working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe. EPHA is a member of, among others, the Social Platform, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), and the EU Civil Society Contact Group.***