Green Paper 'Towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke: policy options at EU level'

2007/2105(INI) - 24/10/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by adopted the own-initiative report drafted by Karl-Heinz **FLORENZ** (EPP-ED, DE) in response to the Commission's Green Paper 'Towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke: policy options at EU level'. The report was adopted by 561 votes in favour to 63 against with 36 abstentions.

Parliament welcomes the Commission's Green Paper as a starting point for a responsible European policy to protect citizens from harmful tobacco smoke. It called on the Commission to classify tobacco smoke in the environment as a class 1 carcinogen so as to bring environmental tobacco smoke under the scope of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive. The Commission must list and quantify the concrete harmful effects of smoking among youth in the Member States with a view to subsequently formulating European objectives for Member States aimed at curbing the uptake and consumption of tobacco among young people, with Member States committing themselves to reduce smoking among youth by at least 50% by 2025. Member States should introduce, within two years, an unrestricted smoking ban in all enclosed workplaces, including catering establishments, and in all enclosed public buildings and transport in the EU

Parliament then asked the Commission to do the following :

- if the objectives referred to above are not attained by all Member States, to submit a proposal by 2011 for rules on the protection of non-smokers in the field of employment protection, while recognising the Member States' existing national provisions. Member States that introduced a full smoking ban in public places, bars and restaurants were asked to create a voluntary charter declaring a 'European smoke free zone', thus creating a spearhead of Member States who had already adopted a full smoking ban on the basis of voluntary membership. Other charter members should consider eventually giving this voluntary charter legislative status through the enhanced cooperation procedure ;

- to submit a proposal for an amendment of the Framework Directive on Workplace Safety and Health requiring all employers to ensure that the workplace is free from tobacco smoke ;

-to produce a report on the cost incurred by national health systems and the EU economy as a result of smoking and the effects of tobacco smoke pollution ;

to present a proposal, by 2008 if possible, for an amendment of Directive 2001/37/EC on tobacco products, containing a list of prescribed matters, including an immediate ban on all addiction-enhancing additives, and an immediate ban on all additives shown by existing toxicological data to be carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic to reproduction as such or upon pyrolysis (burning at a temperature of between 600 and 950°C). Directive 2001/37/EC should also be amended so as to remove the requirement to display tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide yields on cigarette packs, which currently provides smokers with a misleading comparison ;

to support a comprehensive tobacco control and smoking cessation strategy and to examine further EU-wide measures towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke, such as an EU-wide ban on the use of tobacco in the presence of minors in private transport ; an EU-wide ban on the sale of tobacco products to young people under 18 ; the granting of a permit for the installation of cigarette vending machines only if the machines will be inaccessible to minors ; and the removal of tobacco products from self-service displays in retail outlets ;

to investigate what fiscal measures could help to reduce tobacco consumption, particularly by young people, and calls on the Commission to make a recommendation to the Member States on the basis of this investigation

Member States were also asked to do the following :

- to prohibit smoking on public playgrounds within two years ;

- to stop encouraging the purchase of tobacco products by maintaining low taxation rates in their countries;

Parliament welcomed Italy's decision to ban all transports of unlabelled cigarettes as a way to combat smuggling and facilitate determination of origin.

Member States were requested to conduct information and education campaigns concerning healthy lifestyles tailored to all age ranges and social groups in order to enable people to shoulder responsibility for themselves and, where applicable, their children. Parliament felt that such smoking cessation measures should ensure that smokers, particularly the young and those economically less well off, have access to affordable smoking cessation products and treatments, including counselling, so as to ensure that there are no inequalities whereby less-advantaged members of society are discouraged from using them. Information on how to stop smoking, including free phone numbers or a website address, should be visibly available in all outlets where tobacco products are sold.