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

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety 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 Committee welcomes the Commission's Green Paper as a starting point for a responsible European policy to protect citizens from harmful tobacco smoke. They call on the Commission to classify tobacco smoke in the environment as a class 1 carcinogen and on the Member States to introduce, within two years, an unrestricted smoking ban in all enclosed workplaces, including catering establishments, and in all enclosed public buildings and transport. It calls on the Commission to produce a report on the cost incurred by national health systems and the European Union economy as a result of smoking and the effects of tobacco smoke pollution.

It also calls on the Commission to present a proposal, by 2008, if possible, for an amendment of Directive 2001/37/ECon tobacco products, to include provisions regarding tobacco additives, in particular those that are carcinogenic or addictive. In addition, the Committee calls on the Commission to consider further measures such as an EU-wide ban on the sale of tobacco products to young people under 18, the granting of permits for the installation of cigarette machines only where the machines will be inaccessible to young people under 18, the removal of tobacco products from self-service displays in retail outlets and a ban on distance sales of tobacco products to young people under 18 (e.g. over the Internet). The Commission is also invited to list and quantify the concrete harmful effects of smoking among youth in the Member States with a view to reducing smoking among young people by at least 50 percent by 2025.

The Commission is also called upon to: a) investigate what fiscal measures could help to reduce tobacco consumption, particularly by young people and to make a recommendation to the Member States on the basis of this investigation; b) submit proposals to amend Directive 2001/37/EC so as to i) remove the requirement to display tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide yields on cigarette packs (which currently provides smokers with a misleading comparison); ii) make provision for a renewed library of larger, hard-hitting picture warnings to appear on both sides of the tobacco packs.

Member States are called upon to: i) help smokers who want to quit smoking by means of supporting measures, (e.g. smoking cessation interventions); ii) conduct information and education campaigns concerning healthy lifestyles tailored to all age ranges and social groups; and iii) stop encouraging the purchase of tobacco products by maintaining low taxation rates in their countries.