Basic information

1996/2279(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Combating tobacco consumption: Community role **Subject** 4.20.03 Drug addiction, alcoholism, smoking	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	VALVERDE LÓPEZ José (PPE)	05/02/1997

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Health	2013	1997-06-05
Health	2131	1998-11-12

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/12/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0609	Summary
17/01/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
05/06/1997	Debate in Council		
29/10/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
29/10/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0341/1997	
17/12/1997	Debate in Parliament		
18/12/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/01/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		
12/11/1998	Debate in Council		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2279(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/08535

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0341/1997 OJ C 371 08.12.1997, p. 0002	29/10/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0636/1997 OJ C 014 19.01.1998, p. 0107-0197	18/12/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1996)0609	18/12/1996	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(1999)0407	08/09/1999	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0772/1997 OJ C 296 29.09.1997, p. 0032	09/07/1997	Summary

Combating tobacco consumption: Community role

1996/2279(COS) - 09/07/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee welcomes the Commission's intention to step up action to combat smoking. It agrees with the Commission that the Community is in a good position to promote a better overall strategy to combat smoking.The Committee draws attention to the need to target smoking prevention policy, particularly at children and young people. Information, instruction and health education are extremely important. There is also a need to recognize the socio-economic importance of the raw tobacco sector and to investigate ways of helping tobacco producers switch over to other agricultural products or to other activities outside agriculture.

Combating tobacco consumption: Community role

1996/2279(COS) - 18/12/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr José Luis VALVERDE LOPEZ (EPP, E) on the Commission communication on combating tobacco consumption, Parliament noted that the decline in the number of smokers in the Union was slowing down, that increasing numbers of women were smoking and that young people were smoking from an increasingly early age. It reaffirmed its advocacy of an EU directive governing the direct or indirect advertising of tobacco products and strongly urged the Commission to assess to what extent the use of tobacco was promoted through the Internet. Noting the scientific evidence on dangers related to passive smoking it reaffirmed the right of everyone to breathe clean air, For Parliament this right must always prevail over the right to smoke. It supported measures aimed at banning smoking in the workplace and the drawing up of practical measures to reduce children's and adolescents' exposure to tobacco products such as: - a ban on tobacco vending machines, - a ban on cigarette packaging aimed at young consumers, - setting an age limit of 18 years for the purchase of tobacco products throughout the Community, - increases in the price of tobacco in real terms. Similarly, Parliament called for a harmonization of tobacco tax in the Community. It recommended careful monitoring of the display of nicotine levels on packets and the application of standards governing tar levels for hand-rolling tobacco. The Commission was also asked to draw up a proposal placing the excise tax on hand-rolling tobacco on the same footing as that for cigarettes. It also recommended that any substances added to tobacco should be indicated on the label and should be proven not to have any harmful effects for the smoker. It also called for the setting up of an interinstitutional committee to investigate whether tobacco producers were incorporating substances in tobacco in order to intensify addiction to nicotine. The Commission was asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the warnings on packages of cigarettes before proposing possible modifications to the relevant directives on labelling. In this context Parliament did not support its rapporteur who called for health warnings to cover at least 25% of the surface of the package. Stressing the dissuasive effect of price on tobacco consumption, Parliament urged the Commission to propose a harmonization of duty on tobacco products which provided for a coordinated increase in cigarette prices. It also proposed including a telephone number on packages where callers could be given objective information free of charge on tobacco use and information on smoking cessation programmes. It also called for more complete information on the connection between sudden infant death syndrome and smoking. It stressed the need for information campaigns to change the behaviour of smokers and the implementation of cessation programmes (at low cost or free of charge) and nicotine replacement therapy. It also proposed the establishment of a yearly European Prize for the best anti-tobacco project in the Union and a substantial increase in the financing of anti-tobacco projects within the framework of the 'Europe against cancer' programme. Strongly condemning the Union's export of tobacco of poor quality to third countries, it considered that the Community should not support tobacco-related projects in developing countries. It called for the establishment of a UN Convention on combating tobacco use. It stressed that the health dimension must form part of all policies, including the common agricultural policy. Lastly it called on the Commission to launch a legislative initiative seeking to have nicotine declared an addiction-inducing substance, as is the case in the United States and called for the distribution of nicotine-substitute products. The Commission should help coordinate and support at Community and national level the establishment of an NGO platform to require tobacco companies in the Union to pay compensation for the damage done to smokers. Parliament did not adopt its rapporteur's proposal calling on the Council to end direct income support to the tobacco sector in the Union with a view to releasing appropriations which would facilitate a switch to other crops.

Combating tobacco consumption: Community role

1996/2279(COS) - 18/12/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: To set out the possible options for combatting tobacco consumption in the Community, both at Community level and by way of improved cooperation between the Member States. SUBSTANCE: According to the Commission document, tobacco causes half a million deaths in the Community each year. With 42% of the adult population smoking, the death rate will continue to rise sharply into the next century and smoking will remain the largest single cause of avoidable death in the Community. These figures highlight the need for a targeted and coordinated approach towards combatting smoking in the Community. The Commission therefore sets out a series of options in the document for action at Community level in addition to existing provisions (eg. the "Europe Against Cancer" programme, the directive on the maximum tar yield of cigarettes, etc.). The options for additional actions are: - data collection and epidemiological studies: monitoring tobacco consumption on the basis of the action programme for health monitoring; - children: drawing up a code of practice on the right to a smoke-free environment for children; promoting studies and pilot projects in the framework of existing Community public-health programmes to improve understanding of why young people smoke (schools, general anti-smoking campaign amongst young people); -classification: proposing that nicotine addiction be considered as a dependency, thus allowing it to be tackled under existing programmes; - additives: evaluating toxicity and health consequences arising from additives to tobacco products; - carcinogenic agents: examining the case for a further progressive reduction in the maximum tar content of cigarettes (currently 12 mg.); - consumer information and protection: reviewing the implementation of the labelling directive with a view to evaluating its effectiveness in informing consumers of the dangers of smoking (in particular: considering the definition of the description "light" or "low" tar tobacco products, promoting measures to increase awareness among pregnant women, updating the Council resolution on smoking in public places, encouraging the Member States to increase excise duties on tobacco products and, under the common organization of the market for tobacco, increasing from 1% to 2% the proportion of the premium reserved for the Tobacco Research and Information Fund). At the same time, the Commission proposes a set of options for improving cooperation between the Member States. They are: - protecting non-smokers (children, pregnant women and persons suffering from respiratory diseases), - setting specific targets to reduce the number of smokers in the population, - reinforcing national rules aimed at restricting the sale of tobacco products to adults, - increasing the price of tobacco products in real terms, - providing greater protection for workers exposed to above-normal levels of environmental tobacco smoke, - limiting tobacco sponsorship at sporting or cultural events likely to be televised, - increasing funding of health education measures, - providing smoking cessation medication (eg. nicotine patches, etc.) at minimal or no cost to smokers. The Commission intends to examine the reactions to its options and may present proposals in the light of them. It also intends to present an annual report on the progress achieved in protecting public health from the damaging effects of tobacco consumption. The report will present the Member States with specific options for reducing tobacco consumption.