



The World Foundation for Natural Science

The New World Franciscan Scientific Endeavour of The New World Church

Restoring and Healing the World through Responsibility and Commitment in accord with Natural and Divine Law!

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Lucerne, 1st December, 2016

Motion 15.075

Federal Act on Tobacco Products

Dear Sir / Dear Madam

In a few days' time you will be voting in the Swiss National Council on the proposal of the Federal Council regarding the federal act on tobacco products. Have you already made your decision? Or will you be taking the easy road refusing from the outset to discuss the subject at all?



In Switzerland 9,500 people die annually because of the effects of tobacco consumption. **These numbers are three times higher than fatalities from alcohol, suicide, car accidents, illegal drug consumption and AIDS combined.** In other words, in our country, 26 people are dying prematurely because of active or passive tobacco consumption every day. Undoubtedly you are familiar with these figures. Certainly you are also aware of the fact that every six seconds a human being dies because of the effects of smoking and that smoking is the main cause of cancer, especially the almost incurable lung cancer, and the major risk factor for six out of eight of the most

frequent causes of death, i.e. heart attack, stroke, pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD), tuberculosis as well as lung-, bronchial- and trachea cancer (www.tobaccoatlas.org).

“Every smoker knows the risks”, you will probably say, *“It is the one who takes up smoking who is to blame when he dies.”* You are absolutely right in this. Smoking is a wrong and stupid decision taken by the individual. Therefore, the argument often put forward is the individual's freedom of choice, when it comes to regulations and legal provisions with regard to smoking and tobacco products. But what is the situation with the freedom of choice when the reasons influencing such a choice are based on deception, half truths, manipulation and lies? Can we still speak of a freedom of choice when tobacco is a product that interferes with the brain metabolism and within the shortest time creates an addiction? Do you think we're exaggerating? We recommend you watch the movie, “The Tobacco Conspiracy”, in this context. By the way, doesn't it make you think that tobacco product manufacturers rather avoid participation in discussions themselves and much more prefer to be represented by their “allies”, as they call them, such as the Swiss Trade Association or Economie Swiss? The WHO states clearly; **“Evidence from tobacco industry documents reveals that tobacco companies have operated for many years with the deliberate purpose of subverting the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) to control tobacco use. The attempted subversion has been elaborate, well financed, sophisticated, and usually invisible.”**





Tobacco advertisements were not intended to make non-smokers start smoking but merely to inform smokers about the products of their choice. It is not acceptable for the state to interfere with the freedom of choice and process of decision-making of adults - this is what tobacco companies argue. The US Surgeon General's report from 2014 stated: *"THE EVIDENCE IS SUFFICIENT to conclude that advertising and promotional activities by the tobacco companies cause the onset and continuation of smoking among adolescents and young adults."*

Studies clearly show that advertising and sponsorship activities by tobacco product manufacturers (you will mainly be asked to vote on restricting them) are first and foremost targeted at youth and children. It is certainly no accident that the most heavily advertised cigarette brands are the ones that are preferred by adolescents who start smoking. Those who pretend advertising had no impact on whether somebody starts to smoke or not, have to put up with the reproach of naivety and denial. Do you really believe a company would invest millions of Swiss francs into measures that have no impact? As an elected National Councillor it is your duty to represent the interests of the people. If you were to conduct a survey among the population, by asking, for example, "Do you wish to be further informed about tobacco products through various channels? Is it of importance to you for your children to benefit from promotional offers of tobacco product manufacturers during sports and music events?" What do you think the answer would be? **If you do not support these - by international comparison very moderate endeavours of the Swiss Federal Council - to restrict the advertising of a deadly and addictive product, whose interests do you then represent?**



Of course, you can always argue how important the tobacco industry is for Swiss business. In actual fact, Switzerland is acting rather like a banana republic, in regards to export and production of tobacco products and related legal regulations, and not like the advanced Western state we consider ourselves to be. **Switzerland could care less about the European Union restrictions nor the WHO tobacco convention and is shamelessly employing double standards.**

Despite having signed the WHO's tobacco convention, Switzerland does not even think of abiding by its policies and guidelines. Although, in this country too, it is forbidden to sell products with a higher tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide content than allowed on the European market, as the only Western country worldwide we seem to have no problem at all in producing and exporting such tobacco products. Is the attitude, "Let the others die of this, as long as we are earning good money" compatible with the traditionally humanitarian conviction of Switzerland, that we always like to point out? Are we seriously proud of deadly tobacco products displaying the seal of approval "Made in Switzerland"?

Can sales figures be weighed against death, disease and human misery? One could claim that premature deaths due to tobacco consumption can be mutually beneficial - in so far as these citizens through their early demise do not burden the cost of old age provision. However, we doubt that, should this thought already have crossed your mind, you would dare to also make this cynical statement on camera, would you? And what do the calculations look like if health costs, compensation payments for sickness, invalidity, or necessary social benefits caused by loss of income through death are also taken into consideration? After all, most smokers die middle-aged, that is, when they are between 35 and 69 years old. The follow-up costs of tobacco consumption for the population of Switzerland are 10 billion Swiss francs per year. For the immeasurable suffering as a consequence thereof, there is no number.

Surely, the ability to compromise is considered to be a Swiss virtue. However, the ability to compromise and to dilute a legislative proposal up to the point that nothing much of the original intention is left, - these are two different pairs of shoes indeed. In this context, please allow us to point out the issue of e-cigarettes to you. Some would like to deal with them even a little bit more liberally than with traditional tobacco cigarettes on the grounds that electronic cigarettes are far less damaging and could, possibly, help smokers free themselves from their addiction to nicotine. Both assertions are wrong. The consumption of e-cigarettes reduces the probability that smokers will quit smoking by about one third. **On the other hand, adolescents trying out e-cigarettes will be six times more likely to taking up smoking tobacco cigarettes than the ones that don't smoke e-cigarettes** (Pediatrics, July 2016). Even the passively inhaled vapour is damaging because e-cigarettes mostly contain the same poisonous chemicals as traditional cigarettes, often even in a higher dose. Fetuses - through "passive smoking" of e-cigarettes - show changes in the frontal cortex of the brain which are thought to be linked to diseases such as ADD, ADHD and schizophrenia. The effects of e-cigarettes are just as devastating as tobacco cigarettes and therefore should be treated just as restrictively. You can find a detailed summary about the most recent scientific findings on this topic in the book "E-Cigarettes: Re-inventing smoking" by Dr Karl A. Cox.

Professor Nicholas Freudenberg wrote in 2014 in his book "Lethal but legal": "Neither nature, human evolution, nor fate created the new burdens of chronic diseases and injuries. Rather, it was HUMAN DECISIONS made in corporate boardrooms, advertising and lobbying firms, and legislative and judicial chambers." **Please, do remember that the sole purpose of the political lobbying of the tobacco industry, that you might be lending your ear to, is to sell a product leading to addiction and death.** Do you really want to support this questionable end? In "The Tobacco Atlas" it states, "We stand at a crossroads of the tobacco epidemic, with the future in our hands. We can choose to stand aside and take weak and ineffective measures, or instead to implement robust and enduring measures to protect the health and wealth of nations."



It is our hope that on December 8th you will be making a difference with your vote. To show that Switzerland wants to make her contribution as well in stopping the tobacco epidemic, which, if we do not act very quickly, is going to cost the lives of 1 billion people (1,000,000,000) in this century. In order that the children and adolescents in Switzerland are protected from the nefarious business interests of a very few. **Because health is more important than money. You have the freedom of choice.**

Yours sincerely

The World Foundation for Natural Science



The Very Reverend Dean emeritus Paul Probst, SF
European President



Susanne Bellotto
MA

Note:

This letter has been sent to all National Councillors in Switzerland.

At the same time it has been published on the website of The World Foundation for Natural Science, www.naturalscience.org.