



# 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!*

Lucerne, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Dear Federal Councillor,

It is praiseworthy and the only right thing to do that at the end of this year under the framework of the new Tobacco Products Act, you are going to place e-cigarettes as equal to tobacco products. However, the law will then probably come into force only in 2022 – much too late.

We are all now witnessing how smoking is being reinvented and the perception of the population in terms of smoking is being reprogrammed so that this horrible and deadly addiction is once more considered perfectly normal. Until the new law comes into force, that is, for years, the manufacturers of e-cigarettes will be able to circumvent no-smoking policies in indoor and outdoor spaces and can place advertisements where advertising for tobacco products is prohibited. "The mission of Juul is to improve the lives of one billion adult smokers in the world by driving innovation to eliminate cigarettes", wrote the highly popular company a few weeks ago in their job advertisement for a communication and PR manager in Switzerland. As you undoubtedly know, this is all about marketing and sales and not at all about philanthropy.

E-cigarettes are considered to be largely harmless, even though evidence and long-term studies on this are missing. The renowned scientific journal "The Lancet" already proved in August 2015 that the frequently made assertion that e-cigarettes are up to 95% safer than traditional cigarettes, is a pure assumption based on no scientific evidence at all and set up by a small group of individuals who were no experts and, moreover, were subject to a conflict of interest through their links with the industry.<sup>1</sup> Also, the oft-heard assumption that smokers would manage to quit their addiction more easily by using e-cigarettes, does not correspond to the facts. Rather, studies show smokers who turn to vaping are less likely to quit smoking than smokers who do not resort to e-cigarettes at all.<sup>2</sup> Smokers who also vape e-cigarettes, in most cases become dual-consumers which means that they simply smoke both products. As reports show, people then smoke even more. While a typical tobacco cigarette is smoked up after a few minutes and usually must be smoked outside or in specially set-aside rooms, the smoker has to deliberately switch off his e-cigarette and using it is allowed almost everywhere. This leads smokers to reach for the e-cigarette on average of about every 30 minutes, more often than a smoker reaches for tobacco, even if only to take one quick drag.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, there is increasing evidence that e-cigarettes are by no means as harmless as presumed. To give a few examples:

- E-cigarettes increase the risk of oral cancer.<sup>4</sup>
- Vaping impairs the immune defense of the lung and increases inflammation.<sup>5</sup>
- E-cigarettes containing nicotine cause a hardening of the arteries and lead to elevated blood pressure and heart rate.<sup>6</sup> These are signs that e-cigarettes can increase the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer and cardiovascular disease.
- E-cigarette vapour has been shown to damage aspects of lung biology to levels similar to and sometimes beyond tobacco cigarettes.<sup>7</sup>
- E-cigarette vapour is not a harmless water vapour. It contains nicotine, heavy metals,<sup>8</sup> ultrafine particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs (even from passive vaping!), and flavouring substances such as diacetyl, a chemical that can cause serious lung disease.<sup>9</sup> Many of the volatile organic compounds in the e-cigarette vapour are also carcinogenic.<sup>10</sup> Considering this, the fact that e-cigarettes may also be used in places where the smoking of tobacco cigarettes is prohibited in order to protect against passive smoking, and therefore also in the presence of children and pregnant women, old or sick people, is more than alarming.

Propylene glycol, which is used to generate vapour in e-cigarettes, has been associated for some time with chronic lung problems.<sup>11</sup> When heated in the e-cigarette, it turns into carcinogenic formaldehyde.<sup>12</sup> Also, acids such as benzoic acid or salicylic acid used for the production of nicotine salts, such as those used, for example, in "Juul" are not harmless. How they affect the human organism when they are inhaled over long periods of time is not known.

The use of nicotine salts makes inhaling nicotine even easier and less irritating. In addition, the nicotine "hit" is faster and harder, as it is absorbed into the body twice as fast as the nicotine in other vaping products. For this reason for first-time users, especially adolescents, the risk of developing nicotine addiction increases. Regardless the form in which the nicotine comes in with an e-cigarette brand, it is undisputed that these new cigarettes have a special appeal for young people. Products such as "Juul", "myBlue", "Phix", "Logic" or "Market Elite" appeal to the young generation with an affinity for technology through their design. Contrary to their assurances to only want to sell their product to adults, the marketing strategies of e-cigarette manufacturers include hip, colourful, trendy advertisements and intensively use social media channels, targeting youth and young adults. The different flavours of the e-cigarettes – from vanilla, cinnamon, strawberry to watermelon and crème brûlée – also correspond to the preferences of this age group. However, research shows that these flavoured substances may impair cardiac muscle function,<sup>13</sup> they are often toxic<sup>14</sup> and also increase the risk for young people to start smoking in the first place.<sup>15</sup>

In Switzerland, children and young people are left unprotected against the marketing tricks of cigarette manufacturers, because so far there exists no protection for minors. The Codex, which was signed in September 2018 by various parties is, although a step in the right direction, ultimately without legal consequence and gives manufacturers and distributors much leeway. As you certainly know, nicotine is one of the most addictive substances. In adolescents, nicotine delays brain development and has a negative impact on learning, memory and attention.<sup>16</sup>

By trivialising the health hazards posed by e-cigarettes and the false claim that e-cigarettes enable smokers to become free of their addiction, young people are lulled into a false sense of security when experimenting with e-cigarettes. As surveys show, 63% of 15- to 24-year-old Juul consumers in the USA did not know that this product contained nicotine.<sup>17</sup> E-cigarettes can also be used for the consumption of marijuana<sup>18</sup> and other drugs, which again brings with it a whole host of other problems.

The current development shows that the hype around e-cigarettes is indeed more than just a short-term hype, in which young people try out a new product for a short time and then keep their hands off it. As a report of the US Food and Drug Administration dated November 15<sup>th</sup> this year shows, the number of teenage Americans who smoke e-cigarettes last year alone has increased by 78% to 3.6 million consumers aged between about 11 and 17 years,<sup>19</sup> which is an increase the authorities have called an "epidemic". To believe the USA remains an isolated case is to turn a blind eye to the facts. E-cigarettes do not stop people from smoking, they encourage them to smoke or to start smoking again.<sup>20</sup> 80% of young people who tried e-cigarettes continue smoking.<sup>21</sup>

The first health effects are already visible. Thus, young people who vape e-cigarettes (also smoking those without nicotine), suffer more often from respiratory problems than their peers who do not vape.<sup>22,23</sup> Also in the urine of adolescent e-cigarette consumers, various carcinogenic substances could be detected, such as acrylonitrile, acrolein, propylene oxide, acrylamide and crotonaldehyde.<sup>24</sup>

Six out of ten smokers start smoking when they are less than 18 years old. Studies show that teenagers who try e-cigarettes have a higher risk that they will use traditional tobacco cigarettes later on. E-cigarettes do not stop young people from smoking, but rather encourage them to start smoking.<sup>25,26</sup> Statistical data show that it is mostly the young who try e-cigarettes: of the 18- to 29-year-old Americans this year a full 85% already have tried e-cigarettes.<sup>27</sup>

Vaping is currently creating a new generation of young nicotine addicts.<sup>28</sup> Four years are a long time when it comes to a trend that is just about to get going. (According to Euromonitor International the number of vapers has increased worldwide from 7 million in 2011 to 35 million in 2016. This figure is expected to increase to 55 million by 2021.)<sup>29</sup> Are we going to allow posters advertising smoking to hang

everywhere again for years, with similar advertisements appearing in newspapers and magazines, and, because of the unfortunate legal situation, having people insist on being allowed to indulge in this supposedly harmless "pleasure" in restaurants, cinemas, waiting rooms and wherever else, and thus conveying to the children and young people in our country an image of smoking that destroys the decades-long, although in Switzerland shamefully hesitant efforts, to put a final stop to smoking once and for all? Smoking, whether tobacco or chemical liquids, is neither natural nor healthy, and it is still the most avoidable cause of death in the world, to which every year more than 7 million people fall prey.

It is our hope that you will make full use of all the possibilities in your power to prevent us in Switzerland from having to speak in a few years about being hit by a new epidemic of smoking as the United States is experiencing right now. Prevention has been always the better solution than to have to glue back together the broken crockery; this is especially true for smoking. We ask you therefore to take effective measures, particularly to protect children and young people in Switzerland so that the current, unacceptable legal situation cannot be exploited by cigarette manufacturers for years until the coming into force of the tobacco product legislation to still and anew lure people into addiction.

May God support and bless you in your efforts!

Yours sincerely



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