

Tobacco harm reduction about to be exiled from Europe

By ACSH Staff — June 26, 2013

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Last week, EU health ministers met in Luxembourg to deliberate upon the fate of [future tobacco use](#) [1], based upon the Tobacco Products Directive a draft of which was crafted last December. The outcome was sadly predictable: taking their cue from the Tobacco Products Directive and the WHO tobacco treaty that preceded and inspired it, the gathering approved large, grisly warning labels and a likely ban on menthol. These measures may, or may not, have any effect on smoking and death rates from smoking in Europe.

What will have an effect, and not a good one, is the ban on Swedish snus. Snus, a moist snuff product in small pouches that slips between gum and teeth and has led to Swedish men having the lowest smoking and cancer rates in Europe, will remain banned in the EU. As for electronic cigarettes (e-cigs), any marketing of these low risk nicotine delivery devices providing a significant (i.e. effective) dose of nicotine would require nation-by-nation approval, or face a ban.

ACSH s Dr. Gilbert Ross was disappointed by the ministers decisions: These counterproductive restrictions will virtually guarantee that the high smoking rate in the EU where over 700,000 residents die each year of smoking-related diseases will continue.

As for e-cigs, the WHO treaty essentially would ban them, and the EU directive mostly echoes that. It s like the world turned upside down, when the most lethal addictive product cigarettes is available on every street corner, and the low-risk methods to help smokers quit are under global attack. The rise of e-cigs could be a public health miracle, but opposition to them from officials may yet slow down this beneficial trend, costing smokers their lives. We can only hope that [our FDA will not follow](#) [2] this perverse direction.

For a clear, concise and heartfelt discussion of why e-cigarettes should be allowed, indeed encouraged, for addicted smokers, see renowned expert Prof. Lynn Kozlowski s piece in this week s Huffington Post, [3][9 Things to Think About When Thinking About E-Cigarettes](#) [3].

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[1] <http://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2013/06/21/european-ministers-agree-stricter-tobacco->

laws/ztGzn9kQ9kRRmkN0Qia96M/story.html

[2] <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2012/02/16/how-health-regulators-are-killing-american-smokers/>

[3] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lynn-t-kozlowski-phd/e-cigarettes_b_3492528.html