

# Bureaucrats in Brussels agree to kill European smokers

By ACSH Staff — July 11, 2013

## Electronic Cigarettes

<sup>[1]</sup>In a predictable [yet still tragic outcome](#), <sup>[2]</sup>a key committee of the EU Parliament yesterday voted to effectively ban electronic cigarettes containing more than a minimum level of nicotine. E-cigarettes which are being increasingly used by addicted smokers as an aid to quit deadly, addictive cigarettes are now at risk of being taken off the market by the perversely unscientific, counterproductive European Parliament, and being classified as a medicinal product.

The vote in the environment and public health committee was intended to primarily look at ways of making tobacco smoking less attractive to young people, through mandatory warnings, minimum pack sizes, and rules on flavorings (in fact, menthol flavoring was banned by the same committee). However, the EU's Tobacco Products Directive would classify most e-cigarettes as a medicinal product, despite the fact that in the UK alone, 25 percent of all quit attempts were made using e-cigarettes, making them the most popular quit aid. In the U.S., it is estimated that over 3.5 million smokers have tried e-cigarettes, almost all of whom have used the devices, which supply nicotine in water vapor and flavorants, to help them quit smoking.

Before the vote in the parliament today, thousands of vapers (as e-cigarette users call themselves) and others who believe in science-based public health policy protested, arguing that through e-cigarettes they were able to kick the tobacco habit. The vote classifying them as medical devices will mean they must undergo a costly and protracted authorisation processes. As many of the producers of e-cigarettes are small start-up businesses, such a process could push them out of business and reduce choice for e-cigarette users.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross was saddened but unsurprised by this display of ignorance, hypocrisy and greed: There is simply no rational explanation for the near-global opposition among so-called public health officials and anti-smoking NGOs to e-cigarettes. Unless of course the governments fear the effect of diminished cigarette sales on their tax revenues, heaven forbid! Or that the big NGOs are so dependent on funding from the pharmaceutical companies who peddle nearly-useless NRT gums and patches that they have gone over to the dark side, defending their bottom lines instead of public health. Any other explanations pale by comparison. The EU has an over-33 percent smoking rate, and over 700,000 cigarette-related deaths each year, a preventable catastrophe, which this wrong-headed measure will only augment. It's a black day for smokers trying to quit, and for anyone truly devoted to public health.

Now we hear that our FDA is about to release its rules on tobacco products under the 2009 law. We have heard this before, but now the new chief of the tobacco products area of the FDA, Mitch

Zeller, has [targeted October for the big announcement](#) [3]. We can only hope that our regulators will be more beholden to the overall public health benefit of e-cigarettes than adhering to some dogma based on the evil tobacco industry of the past century and allow smokers continued access to this technology.

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[1] <http://hsdispatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ElectronicCigarette.jpg>

[2] <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324694904578597773130189776.html>

[3] <http://www.cspnet.com/news/tobacco/articles/fda-plans-issue-proposed-regulations-other-tobacco-products-october-2013>