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Association Indépendante Des Utilisateurs de Cigarette Electronique

<http://www.aiduce.fr>

For the first time, AIDUCE (association of users) and the OFT (tobacco prevention) have joined forces to raise the alarm about the future of the electronic cigarette in France and in Europe.

In France, after having been stable since 2005, cigarette sales fell by 3% in 2012 and by a further 8% over the first seven months of 2013; thereby saving thousands of lives.

The most plausible explanation for the drop in tobacco sales is the emergence of the e-cigarette; 22.6% of smokers (3 million) have tried them, according to the analysis of Eurobarometer 2012, a figure that by now is likely to have more than doubled. Today, there are almost 400 specialised shops in France, whereas at the beginning of 2013 there were only 100.

E-cigarette vapour delivers nicotine, a few irritants and traces of undesirable pollutants. Norms must be established to ensure the quality of liquids and common labelling; but we already know from available scientific data that e-cigarette vapour is infinitely less toxic than tobacco smoke. Replacing cigarettes by e-cigarettes is a gain for public health. However it is not a product designed for non-smokers or minors and its use by them should be prevented as much as possible.

To accelerate the switch from tobacco to the e-cigarette, easy access to e-cigarettes by smokers must be maintained. In the United Kingdom, medicine status might still allow wide distribution (it would be freely available through the NHS and be sold through supermarkets) but even in that context the medicalisation process would lead to the disappearance of all products currently available on the market. In countries like France, a pharmaceutical status (which French pharmacies do not want) would considerably reduce access to the product (other than through illegal means) and would harm efforts to reduce tobacco consumption.

An amendment proposed by Frédérique Ries, Rebecca Taylor and Chris Davies offers a non-pharmaceutical status for products that do not claim health benefits and which have a nicotine concentration of less than 30mg/ml (a rate which could be lowered to 24 or to 20mg/ml as in France). The amendment seeks to impose rules to ensure continuous improvement in product safety, the prevention of use by non-smokers and that the product should not be used as a means to promote tobacco.

Brice Lepoutre, President of AIDUCE and Professor Bertrand Dautzenberg stand together in saying:

"We agree that the e-cigarette market should be normalised and regulated to ensure quality and transparency for European vapers, whilst discouraging its use by minors and non-smokers.

We do not agree that the e-cigarette be classed as a medicine. The e-cigarette should remain easily accessible by smokers throughout Europe; for the more smokers can access the product, the more smokers will quit tobacco".

The vote on the Tobacco Products Directive is on 8 October, when the European Parliament in Strasbourg will decide the status of the e-cigarette for the next 20 years.

Both associations ask MEPs not to follow the tobacco lobby which seeks to kill off the tobacco directive, not to follow the pharmaceutical industry lobby that demands an exclusive pharmaceutical status, but to listen to Associations that are truly independent representatives of e-cigarette consumers such as AIDUCE or to key players in the public health arena such as the OFT which has thoroughly analysed the adverse consequences of an exclusive pharmaceutical status.

MEPs should facilitate the development of a product which is beginning to have a tangible public health benefit.

No to the exclusive pharmaceutical status of e-cigarettes in Europe !

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