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Press-release

Healthcare Committee of Ukrainian Parliament supported new cigarette package design and banning flavorings according to EU Directive of 2014

On October 7, 2015 MPs of Healthcare Committee recommended the draft law #2820 "About amending some of the laws of Ukraine regarding public health protection from the harmful impact of tobacco use" for the first hearing in the Parliament. This decision was made after intense 45 minutes debates between MPs, tobacco industry representatives and tobacco control organization during the Committee session. However the manipulative arguments of the tobacco industry have not prevented the important milestone decision made by the profile committee to improve tobacco control legislation in Ukraine.

The draft law 2820 was registered on May 13, 2015 by 6 MPs from different political fractions. The legislation draft aims at implementing of Articles 9, 10, 11 and its Guidelines of the WHO FCTC into Ukrainian legislation. The lawmakers use Directive 2014/40/EU, its text, definitions and wordings for the draft law. The new policy proposal presupposes to change the design and increase the size of the health warnings from 50 to 65%, and to be located on both sides of the packs in upper part of the pack. It also prohibits using tobacco additives and flavorings, imposes regulations for the electronic cigarettes and smoking herbal mixes, and increases tobacco industry responsibility to disclose the content and emissions of cigarettes. [The full text of the document is here.](#)

Hence the strong opposition of tobacco industry and its front groups during debates, 8 of 10 MPs supported the draft law 2820 and acted according to the Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

"We should not consider any private interests of tobacco companies when it comes to public health. We repeatedly witness that tobacco and alcohol lobbyists try to justify death of people with some "economic feasibility". In fact, tobacco is globally recognized as the most harmful product allowed to be consumed," – summarized MP Oleg Musiy, Deputy Head of the Committee and co-author of the draft law.

"Today we prevented an unsuccessful attempt to "kill" the anti-tobacco draft law. The opponents offered to merge with other initiatives for the weak law revision based on EU Directive of 2001, withdrawal the draft law and blackmail with unrealistic deadlines. Technical questions, including postponing the law implementation for 2 years could be considered as a compromise between first and second hearings. But to abandon progressive EU norms that costs zero to the state budget, and to postpone the decision would be irresponsible," – said Andriy Skipalskyi, Chairman of Advocacy Center Life and co-author of the draft law.

By the end of the year the draft law might be presented in the Parliament that hopefully would support the text.

Many organizations and institutions united to support the draft law 2820. Among them are Ukrainian Ministry of Health, Regional Office of WHO, World Bank, Smoke Free Partnership, European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP), Smoke Free Coalition of Ukraine and Reanimation Package of Reforms.

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