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Letter to the Editor

The framework convention on tobacco control's original sin

Lien and DeLand suggested to use the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) as a model for other non-communicable disease control.¹

This international treaty designed to respond to the tobacco pandemic has an original sin which precludes effectiveness: the lack of a monitoring body for reporting violations. These are enduring and obvious.

France was the first of the old Members of the European Union to ratify the FCTC treaty in October 2004. However, cigarette sales remain steady from 54.9×10^3 metric tons in 2004 to 55.0×10^3 in 2010 while cross-border purchase increased as rolling tobacco sales. This result is not surprising as the measures implemented for tobacco control appear flawed.^{2,3} A national study in March 2011 showed an increase in prevalence of daily smoking in those 17 y old from 28.9% in 2008 to 31.5% in 2011.⁴ This suggests that the government sacrifices its citizens' health to vested interests, for tobacco control as for alcohol control.⁵

Netherlands has weakened existing smoke-free-laws, reversed the support for smoking cessation, and plan to close down the national center on tobacco control (STIVORO).⁶

These governments must be blamed for breaching the article 5.3 of the FCTC which specifically requires protecting public policy from tobacco industry influences.

Neither naivety nor hope can yield compliance and results. *Errare humanum est, sed perseverare diabolicum* (to err is human, but to persist in the mistake is diabolical).

Conflict of interest

Pr Dubois was sued for libel by the Confédération des Buralistes (the French tobaccoists' union) in Sept 2009. Dr Braillon, a senior tenured consultant in Pr Dubois' unit was sacked in Sept 2010 by the National Management Centre (Department of Health) against the advice of the National Statutory. (Abuse of libel laws and a sacking: The gagging of public health experts in France. Tobacco control blog 8 November 2010).

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