

Statement of the German Coalition against Smoking

Most recently, the tobacco industry signed a contract with the German health ministry offering money to conduct prevention campaigns targeting children and youth. The acceptance of the money, an annual sum that equals 1% of the annual investment of the German tobacco industry in advertising and promotion of its products was strongly criticized by the German Coalition against smoking and opens an array of questions on the relationship between the German government and the tobacco industry.

The article of the working group around Stanton Glantz now reveals the tobacco industry strategies to influence European Community politics and the longstanding relationship between German politics and the tobacco industry.

The speaker of the German Coalition against smoking, Dr. Raffael Gassmann explains: "What we always suspected now is now documented in the industry's own words". While we formerly had evidence only on the tobacco industry's influence on science, we are especially shocked by the revelation that the German tobacco industry viewed former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl as a close ally from as early as 1978".

The German position towards the Warsaw declaration of the WHO European ministerial conference of February 2002 and the position of Germany during the last round of negotiations for the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) clearly shows that there has been no change up to date in the German position towards effective tobacco control.

The coalition against smoking strongly condemns the willingness of German politicians to support and represent the interests of an industry whose products kill more than half of its consumers when used as intended. In Germany tobacco use annually kills more than 100 000 people.

In face of these released proofs of the industry influence on German as well as European politics the German coalition against smoking demands:

- Transparency of political decision making concerning tobacco control politics by conducting a public inquiry about the past and ongoing influence of the tobacco industry on political decision making on national and European level;
- An end to the acceptance of financial support from the tobacco industry by political parties, institutions and individual political decision makers;
- Governments and political decision makers to refuse the tobacco industry as advisor in tobacco control issues/measures;
- Release of internal documents pertaining to Germany/German speaking region comparable to the release in the USA;
- Fundamental change of German tobacco control politics, primarily to put in place evidence-based measures of tobacco control (i.e. complete ban of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; tax raise on all tobacco products; combat smuggling of tobacco products etc.)
- financial support of NGO's active in tobacco prevention and control

In the name of the German coalition against smoking:

the German Centre against Addiction (DHS), the German Cancer Aid Fund, the German Cancer Research Centre, the German Medical Association, the Federal Association for Health (BfGe), the Medical Working Group Tobacco and Health.