



ECMA

## EUROPEAN CIGAR MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

# ECMA views on the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive

### Introduction

With an annual consumption of approximately 6.3 billion pieces, cigar consumption represents barely 0,8% of the total consumption of tobacco products in the European Union. Cigars tend to be smoked occasionally rather than daily: according to the Special Eurobarometer report "Tobacco" (May 2010) 62% of cigar smokers smokes less than 1 cigar per day. The cigar smoker generally is a male adult of mature age: the majority of cigar smokers are over 35 years of age.

The European Cigar Manufacturers Association (ECMA) represents 20 cigar producing companies that together employ more than 5.100 persons in the European Union and more than 20.000 in countries outside the European Union. Of the 20 ECMA member companies, twelve are family-owned and seven fall under the definition of small and medium sized enterprises.

Cigar making is a labour intensive process. Cigars are being produced and sold in an enormous variety of models, brands, types of packaging and prices. The variety of products means that cigars are generally produced in small production runs. Cigars are produced at a speed between 20 and 50 cigars per minute, to be compared with up to 18,000 cigarettes per minute.

### Differentiation

For all the above reasons, ECMA is of the opinion that cigars need to be treated differently from other tobacco products: the specific characteristics of the cigar consumer, -sector and -product need to be taken into account when regulating tobacco products. A "one size fits all approach" to tobacco regulation would not work as it would create a disproportionate burden for the cigar industry. Due to its enormous variety of models and brands, its small scale production processes and its many small to medium sized businesses, of which a big part is still family owned, most cigar companies simply do not have the resources and know-how to cope with the same requirements as larger firms with much smaller assortments and higher sales volumes.

### Consequences for the TPD revision

**Labelling:** ECMA agrees that children should not smoke and should be actively discouraged from doing so. ECMA also agrees to the fact that the cigar consumer - who is typically a male, adult and occasional smoker - should be informed about the health risks associated with smoking. However, we are of the opinion that enlarged warnings, pictorial warnings or plain packaging are not necessary to achieve that goal. Health warning texts such as the ones prescribed by the current TPD sufficiently guarantee that the cigar smoker is well informed.

**Ingredients:** Under the condition that adequate protection for competitively sensitive information and trade secrets is ensured ECMA supports the principle of the common reporting format for ingredients disclosure as suggested by the DG SANCO "Practical Guide on ingredient reporting" dated 31 May 2007 combined with the electronic submission via the EMTOC system. As regards the regulation of ingredients the focus should, in our view, be to ensure that ingredients used do not increase the inherent toxicity of tobacco smoke and that such regulation is not based on arbitrary criteria like "attractiveness".

**Display of tobacco products:** ECMA questions the legal basis to restrict the display of tobacco products at point of sale as such regulations would neither respect the principle of subsidiarity nor improve the functioning of the internal market. Due to its small sales volumes, the cigar sector would be disproportionately disadvantaged by any restrictions on the display of tobacco products at point of sale. Many of the smaller cigar brands are not very well known. In case these brands are not displayed, the cigar consumer will be unaware of them and will only ask for the better known brands.

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Reitseplein 1 • 5037 AA Tilburg • P.O. Box 4076 • 5004 JB Tilburg • The Netherlands  
Phone: +31 13 594 41 25 • Fax: +31 13 594 47 48 • [ecma.secretariat@iae.nl](mailto:ecma.secretariat@iae.nl) • [www.ecma.eu](http://www.ecma.eu)