Press release | 19.12.2012

EU tobacco rules

Commission proposals on packaging and additives a start but can be improved

The European Commission today presented long-awaited legislative proposals revising EU rules on tobacco products. The Greens welcomed the proposals as an important start but cautioned that the provisions on packaging and additives need to be improved. Commenting on the proposals, Green public health spokesperson **Carl Schlyter** (MEP, Sweden) said:

"After months of controversy and allegations of inappropriate industry lobbying, we welcome the fact that this crucial legislation for public health is now on the table. A transparent and democratic legislative process must now follow, with the interests of public health and EU citizens as the guiding principle.

"Tobacco is the largest single cause of avoidable death in Europe and strengthening EU rules on packaging and additives must be a top priority with a view to addressing this. Today's proposals from the Commission are an important first step to this end however both the provisions on packaging and on additives will need to be strengthened during the legislative process.

"While the Commission has proposed improving health warnings on cigarette packets (with the amount of the packet devoted to health warnings increasing from 40-75%), we regret the failure to propose plain packaging. If we are to get serious about tackling the public health impact of tobacco products, we need to ensure they cannot be marketed as sexy products aimed at appealing to young consumers. Regrettably, the Commission has left this to the whim of member states.

"The proposal to ban characterising flavours and certain other additives (vitamins, caffeine, colourants etc.) is welcome but the Greens would like to see the legislation go further, with a ban on all flavours in cigarettes. Flavoured tobacco products are another tool for increasing the marketing appeal to younger consumers. This is exactly what these rules should be seeking to outlaw."

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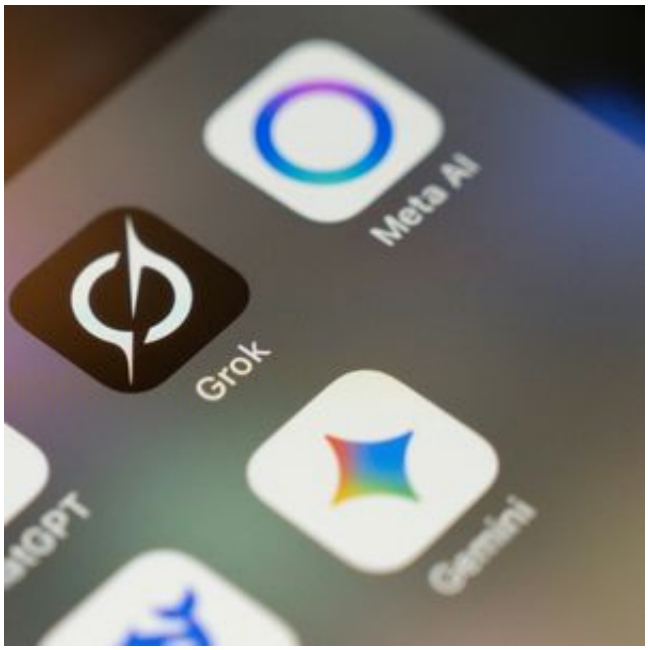


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