

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cabinet of Commissioner Tonio Borg
Head of Cabinet

Brussels,

09. 04. 2013

Dear Mr. Bates,

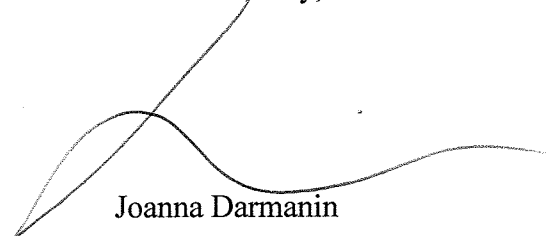
Thank you for your message of 18 March 2013 to Commissioner Borg and for the accompanying documents on snus and harm reduction, to which the Commissioner has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Commission is aware that the adverse health effects of snus differ from those of other tobacco products. However, this does not mean that snus is a safe or a harmless product. Snus has also not proven beyond doubt its value as a cessation product. Moreover, it is difficult to foresee how new markets and potential consumers would react to the introduction of snus, in particular in view of intensive product developments in recent years, including the launch of new heavily flavoured products in attractive packages, as well as new market opportunities created by national laws prohibiting smoking in public places.

The negative health effects of snus and other types of smokeless tobacco have been confirmed by the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks in 2008. Ending the ban of oral tobacco would also be contrary to the advice of Swedish Health Authorities. The Swedish National Institute of Public Health supports the current ban, on the grounds of snus' adverse effects on health and its addictiveness. Moreover, in the public consultation preceding the legislative proposal, as well as during the current examination of the proposal in the Council, most Member States oppose lifting the ban on snus. The legality of the ban of oral tobacco has also been confirmed by the European Court of Justice.

The Commission is therefore of the opinion that sufficient evidence supports maintaining the ban of oral tobacco in the proposal for the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive.

Yours sincerely,



Joanna Darmanin

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