

## **The Truth Must Be Shown**

### **EU governments need to act now to save lives**

#### **Urgent call for picture warnings on tobacco products**

In advance of World No Tobacco Day on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2009, the European Respiratory Society (ERS) together with the European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP), called today on governments in Europe to urgently adopt graphic image warnings on tobacco products.

Commenting on the importance of having graphic images on cigarette packages, the President of the ENSP and Chair of ERS Tobacco Control Committee, Prof Luke Clancy said:

“To date only three Member States have pictorial warnings in place: Belgium, UK and Romania. While this is a positive move it is nowhere near where we need to be. I strongly urge those responsible in the other 24 Member States to introduce effective health picture warnings as soon as possible. Warnings that include pictures are proven to motivate users to quit and to reduce the appeal of tobacco for those who are not yet addicted”.

“Nicotine is a highly addictive substance. Warning people about its true risks can go a long way towards reducing tobacco addiction. Requiring warnings on tobacco packages is a simple, cheap and effective strategy that can vastly reduce tobacco use and save lives. Now is the time to act” concluded Clancy.

#### **Editor’s notes:**

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death. More than five million people die from the effects of tobacco every year — more than from HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.

- It is the only legal consumer product that kills when used exactly as the manufacturer intends.
- Up to half of all smokers will die from a tobacco-related disease. Tobacco companies spend tens of millions of Euros every year turning new users into addicts and keeping current users from quitting.
- Through advertising and promotional campaigns, including the use of carefully crafted package designs, the tobacco industry continues to divert attention from the deadly effects of its products.

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**See also:** <http://www.ensp.org/> <http://www.ersnet.org>

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2009/en/index.html>