



**To: Cecilia Malmstrom, European Commissioner for Trade**

**Frans Timmermans First Vice-president of the European Commission, responsible for Sustainable Development and Transparency**

**Cc: Dr. Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety**

Brussels, 17 May 2018

We are writing to you on behalf of the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), InterAmerican Heart Foundation, Healthy Latin America Coalition (CLAS) and NCD Alliance with members and partners across the European Union, Latin America and globally.

We write to you to express our deep concern over the risks to public health arising from the EU's trade negotiations with Mexico, Chile and Mercosur. EPHA's new report, *Unhealthy Trades*, highlights the scandal that tobacco is explicitly identified among the EU's offensive interests in negotiations with Mercosur. Please find the report attached. Tobacco is a product unlike any other, in that its principal effect is to cause chronic diseases, killing 700,000 people annually in Europe alone<sup>1</sup>, and is among the top five risk factors for disability adjusted life years lost in Mexico, Chile and all Mercosur countries.<sup>2</sup>

In pushing tobacco in its trade deals, the EU is championing the export of disease, premature mortality and considerable health-related costs to its partner countries. This contradicts the EU's commitments to deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals both domestically and globally<sup>3</sup>, and creates a significant barrier to the economic development of partner countries, by imposing a higher burden of disease.

To spend European funding on encouraging European smokers to quit<sup>4</sup>, whilst simultaneously promoting the export of, and investment in, health harmful products and habits to partner countries is manifestly hypocritical. This undermines President Juncker's statement that the EU is a global champion "defending open, fair and rules-based trade"<sup>5</sup> – trade that does not properly value health and prioritises the economic gain of tobacco companies over the health of citizens not only cannot be described as fair, but also contravenes the EU's commitments to the UN Agenda 2030.<sup>6</sup>

If public health were properly accounted for in EU trade deals and their assessment, tobacco would be rightly off the agenda as an EU offensive interest. However, we observe that the required sustainability impact assessments (SIA) of trade negotiations are disregarded by your services: the EU-Mexico deal has reached political conclusion, before the SIA is even finalised, which makes a mockery of

the process as it is impossible for the results to have any meaningful impact on the final agreement.

Can you assure us that the EU will immediately stop promoting ill-health through its trade deals, and that you are committed to the SDGs including the protection of public health in the EU and globally?

We ask you to publicly commit to:

- Exclude health-harmful lobbies, especially big tobacco, from all future EU trade negotiations: Trade deals have a proven impact on public health, therefore the tobacco lobby must be excluded as they are excluding from health policymaking under the UN Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, FCTC.
- Publicly drop tobacco as an offensive interest in EU-Mercosur and never identify tobacco as offensive interest in any future trade negotiations
- Conduct a health impact assessment of all trade deals in place and for future deals conduct the HIA before the start of negotiations; institute a requirement that FTAs cannot be concluded before the sustainable impact assessments (SIAs) are finalised and the deals amended to ensure sustainability commitments are in no way undermined.

We would ask you to respond to this letter, and the above asks, **before World No Tobacco Day, 31st May 2018**. Please find our report attached, we look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

**Nina Renshaw**  
*Secretary General*  
European Public Health Alliance  
(EPHA)

**Matthew L. Myers**  
*President*  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

**Beatriz Champagne, PhD**  
*Coordinator*  
Healthy Latin America Coalition (CLAS)  
*Director*  
Interamerican Heart Foundation

**Eugenia Ramos, PhD**  
*Executive Director*  
InterAmerican Heart Foundation

**Katie Dain**  
*CEO*  
NCD Alliance

## NOTES

1. European Commission (2014), Infographic: Tobacco in the EU. [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/tobacco/docs/infographics\\_tobacco.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/tobacco/docs/infographics_tobacco.pdf) [Accessed 22/01/2018]
2. Global Burden of Disease (2016) <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/> [Accessed 23/01/2018]
3. EU law requires all relevant EU policies, including trade policy, to promote sustainable development. The EU claims to be fully committed to implementing the Agenda 2030 into all EU policies, including trade agreements. <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/policy-making/sustainable-development/>
4. [https://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/ex\\_smokers\\_are\\_unstoppable\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/ex_smokers_are_unstoppable_en)
5. <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1830>
6. 2030 Agenda Goal 3 is to “Ensure health lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. Goal 3.a is to “Strengthen the implementation of the WHO FCTC in all countries, as appropriate”