



The President

Mr Olivier Hoedeman  
Research and Campaigns Coordinator  
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1050 Brussels

316414 04.10.2013

Dear Mr Hoedeman,

Thank you for your mail of 1 October 2013 enclosing a letter from eleven public health and transparency NGOs in which they express concern about the decision to delay the plenary vote on the Tobacco Products Directive and draw attention to the WHO Framework on Tobacco Control. I agree that revision of the directive is a highly sensitive issue and should therefore be treated carefully and with the utmost attention.

Following the adoption of the relevant report in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety in July, the vote in plenary was set for the October I plenary. The date of the vote was agreed by a majority of political groups - who decide on the plenary agenda including the timing of votes - in order to allow Members sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the document on which they are to vote, bearing in mind that the vote in committee was held just before the summer recess.

Moreover, due to the high numbers of amendments which have been introduced to the plenary, translation of these amendments into all languages was only available a few days before the scheduled vote. It is in the spirit of the Rules of Procedure to allow time for reflection and informed decision.

As far as the WHO Framework on Tobacco Control and the associated WHO Guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3 thereof are concerned, I would first point out that those guidelines are not binding and parties are only encouraged to implement them to the extent possible in accordance with national law.

The European Parliament has a self-imposed Code of Conduct binding for all Members of Parliament\* which aims to combine the self-responsibility which comes with a free parliamentary mandate and a maximum of transparency and accountability in contacts and meetings with representatives of interest groups.

Yours sincerely,

**Martin Schulz**

\*([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/meps/201305\\_Code\\_of\\_conduct\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/meps/201305_Code_of_conduct_EN.pdf))