



# GERMAN MEDICAL ACTION GROUP SMOKING AND HEALTH (GMASH)

ÄRZTLICHER ARBEITSKREIS RAUCHEN UND GESUNDHEIT E.V.

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## Reemtsma Liberty Award

Dear Mr. Moreno Ocampo,

The German tobacco company Reemtsma, a subsidiary of the Imperial Tobacco Group, is heralding you as key note speaker at this year's presentation ceremony of the 'Liberty Award' in Berlin on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

The award is a prime example of the tobacco industry's attempts to mend its tarnished image. More importantly, Reemtsma's lobbyists use the gala ceremony on the occasion of the award presentation as platform to meet with politicians, media representatives and opinion leaders in arts or fashion. In short, the 'Liberty Award' is a potent marketing tool.

The tobacco industry is in disrepute for good reason. Tobacco use kills more than 5,000,000 people per year worldwide. Among the five greatest risk factors for mortality, it is the single most preventable cause of death<sup>1</sup>. In comparison, the ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been reported to cause the violent death of 174,000 civilians as of April 2014<sup>2</sup>. Global battle deaths from non-state and state-based conflicts are estimated to amount to 26,000 in 2011<sup>3</sup>.

In global terms, the yearly death rate of about 25,000 people in Germany caused by products of Reemtsma<sup>4</sup> is perhaps just a trifle. In our view, these are 25,000 deaths too many.

According to the report of the UN Secretary-General, essential measures to reduce major risk factors for non-communicable diseases are comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship<sup>5</sup>. It would be highly disconcerting, if a leading proponent of liberty and social justice lets himself be used by the tobacco industry to promote its corporate image and lend credibility to its sponsoring activities.

Thus, the German Medical Action Group Smoking or Health (GMASH), an association of medical doctors engaged in tobacco control, and the wider German health community appeal urgently to **you to reconsider your participation in the 'Liberty Award' ceremony**. We feel certain that the global health organisations are of the same opinion, and share this plea.

In our view, you are under no obligation to cooperate with Reemtsma. The tobacco company certainly values your contribution to its marketing activities in Germany, but does not care for the ensuing loss of your reputation on the global level.

Yours sincerely



Prof. Dr. med. Friedrich Wiebel  
Chairman of GMASH

#### Sources of information

- <sup>1</sup> [http://www.who.int/tobacco/health\\_priority/en/](http://www.who.int/tobacco/health_priority/en/)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://costsofwar.org/article/civilians-killed-and-wounded>
- <sup>3</sup> Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v.5-2012, [http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp\\_battle-related\\_deaths\\_dataset/](http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_battle-related_deaths_dataset/).
- <sup>4</sup> [http://www.reemtsma.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=202&Itemid=187](http://www.reemtsma.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=202&Itemid=187). The market share of Reemtsma tobacco products in Germany is about 25 %. The total number of deaths attributable to tobacco use in Germany is estimated to be 110 to 140 thousands per year.
- <sup>5</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/83&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/83&Lang=E)