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Press Release

Tobacco ad in front of day-care center for children in Dortmund pasted over Civil disobedience for better protection of children

Together with Mario Krüger, a member of the North Rhine Westphalian parliament, members and friends of Forum Rauchfrei (Forum Smokefree) pasted over a tobacco ad in close vicinity of a day-care center for children in Dortmund. The act aimed at a better protection of children from tobacco industry influence and to call attention to the long overdue ban of outdoor advertising for tobacco products in Germany. Forum Rauchfrei is thus criticizing advertisements contradicting the interests of society and calls for a comprehensive ban of tobacco advertising.

Johannes Spatz, spokesman of Forum Rauchfrei, thinks “Society must not accept that children are approached by the tobacco industry. It is unbearable that the German government has not yet met the legal obligation to ban outdoor tobacco advertising. It gives way to tobacco industry’s pressure.”

The pasting over was part of Forum Rauchfrei’s campaign “Stop the tobacco trade fair in Dortmund!” “A tobacco trade fair like the Inter-tabac in Dortmund is nothing but a giant tobacco advertising machine,” says Spatz.

Forum Rauchfrei views the posting of a tobacco ad near a day-care center for children as a violation of § 22 of the German Tobacco Act. This paragraph includes the special protection of young people from tobacco advertising. “In our view children should enjoy this special protection, too, as they also are receptive to tobacco ads,” says Spatz.

This point of view had already been confirmed in the 1990s in a study by Paul M. Fischer, which showed that more than 90 % of the tested six year-old children associated a tobacco brand’s logo with cigarettes (Paul M. Fischer: Brand Logo Recognition by Children Aged 3 to 6 Years – Mickey Mouse and Old Joe the Camel). The same study also showed that children are influenced at a very early age when it comes to their adult behavior as consumers.