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Press Release

Black Friday for Protection of Non-Smokers

The proposal of the German grand coalition for non-smoker protection sends it rolling backwards. Johannes Spatz, spokesperson for Forum Rauchfrei, is very disappointed by the proposed concept for smoke-free public, buildings, hospitals and restaurants; he is announcing a massive protest. A legislatively prescribed health hazard for restaurant personnel in smoking rooms contravenes the Constitution. The proposal to allow establishment of smoking rooms in hospitals will significantly impede the regulations of individual lands which mandate completely smoke-free hospitals. Regulations already approved in Berlin and Bremen will also be called into question. There, smoking in hospitals is to be prohibited, with individual exceptions made by physicians for smoking possibilities in psychiatric and palliative care facilities.

The distinction between restaurants and taverns (public houses) is incomprehensible, since it is precisely in "pubs" that one finds much higher smoke concentrations than in restaurants. The proposal to allow establishment of smoking rooms in public buildings is also a step backward for many municipalities

The coalition bill is an ultra-soft paper which hardly bothers to conceal its authorship. In reality the lobbying associations of the gastronomic and tobacco industries were successful. The document verifies that the profit interests of the tobacco industry set the tone, not the right of the public to protection from passive smoke. It essentially reflects the 13 September 2006 "suggestion" of the Association of the Cigarette Industry. According to Spatz, the coalition politicians have allowed themselves to be made marionettes of the tobacco industry.

Forum Rauchfrei, which stands for comprehensive protection of non-smokers nationwide, is calling for an open and democratic debate on the protection of non-smokers. Johannes Spatz firmly rejects the proposal of the coalition group. The restricted nature of a small commission must not be of prime importance for the protection against passive smoke; rather, it must be the will of the people, the majority of whom demand unambiguous statutory regulations.