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## Press release

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**Berlin, 21.02.06**

### Philip Morris in sheep's clothing

Philip Morris is effectively attracting media attention today by donating the patronizing sum of 100,000 Euros to the BIG project (Berlin Initiative Against Domestic Violence) in the presence of State Secretary Susanne Ahlers. By this means this tobacco company is attempting to acquire a benevolent image. This generous donation is to facilitate mobile operations which are to help with immediate interventions when women have been victimized by domestic violence. In this way the company is attempting to cover up the fact that it shares responsibility for the suffering and death of thousands of women in Berlin. Philip Morris uses this project as part of its strategy to obtain social recognition. The tobacco industry targets women with advertising for its death-promoting products. Aggressive cigarette advertising has produced catastrophic results: The mean age for women to begin smoking has fallen from over 23 in the 1970s down to 11.6 today. Meanwhile girls have overtaken boys in the rate of smoking. While the incidence of lung cancer in men has been falling for years, it is increasing in women. Philip Morris cannot buy itself free of these effects of smoking.

In the opinion of Forum Rauchfrei the care of abused women is one of the core responsibilities of government. Giselly Leinenbach, spokesperson for Forum Rauchfrei, calls upon the senate administration to take over the financing of the mobile operations so as not to allow the tobacco industry to create a distinctive image for itself as a patron of this social project. The refusal of the state up to now to finance such indispensable social aid projects has created a willingness to accept funds from the sale of death-promoting products for such public projects.

Johannes Spatz, spokesperson for Forum Rauchfrei, is convinced of the urgent need for mobile operations. However, he condemns the senate administration for allowing this dependency and not assuming the financing itself. It is also reprehensible that it even stages the handing over of the funds in the pompous festive setting of the Rotes Rathaus (Red City Hall) in the presence of the state secretary.

The everyday goal of this tobacco industry is not to strengthen the physical integrity of people, especially women, but rather to achieve the physical and psychological dependency of these people upon their products.

Senatsverwaltung für Gesundheit, Soziales und Verbraucherschutz: Gesundheitsberichterstattung Berlin, Basisbericht 2003/2004. Berlin, 2004, p. 274 (Senate Administration for Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection: Berlin Health Report)

Robert Koch Institut: Gesundheitsverhalten von Schülern in Berlin. Berlin, 2003, p. 64 (Health Habits of School Children in Berlin)

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