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Press Release

Cigarette company JTI intends to take legal action against Johannes Spatz

Cigarette company Japan Tobacco International Germany (JTI) is threatening to take legal action against Forum Rauchfrei's spokesman Johannes Spatz, in case he doesn't confirm in writing, no longer to damage the company's advertising bills. Spatz is also to take a picture off Forum Rauchfrei's homepage. The picture shows Spatz tampering with a poster advertising JTI's cigarette brand Camel.

The text on the website below the picture reads: "Tobacco ads banned? No chance. Outdoor advertising for tobacco products will be allowed in Germany until the year 2020. All the other European countries abide by the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which bans tobacco advertising. We lend a helping hand to politics with a spring cleaning."

The deadline, which the company has set for submitting a declaration of cease and desist, is ending today. "I will not give in to the tobacco company's demands", Johannes Spatz states. In his view a tobacco company, advertising a product from which 121,000 people in Germany die each year, should be held responsible rather than a person protesting against such ads.

"According to Germany's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Act tobacco advertising should have been banned in 2010", Spatz says. At the same time he criticizes the federal minister for food and agriculture, who is responsible for Germany's new Tobacco Products Act. The draft bill for this act included a ban on outdoor advertising for 2016. The ban was then postponed until 2020. According to Spatz this delay is completely unjustified. It is exclusively caused by pressure from tobacco lobbyists to whom the government once again condescended.

If a company with a turnover of more than half a billion USD each year presses charges over one damaged advertising bill, this clearly shows how raw their nerves are with regard to an impending advertising ban. "I am looking forward to the announced court proceedings", says Spatz.