



Action on Smoking and Health Scotland
8 Frederick Street, Edinburgh EH2 2HB
Telephone: 0131 225 4725
Fax: 0131 225 4759
E-mail: ashscotland@ashscotland.org.uk

www.ashscotland.org.uk

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Mayor Ullrich Sierau
City of Dortmund
44122 Dortmund
Germany

Open letter: Please stop the Inter-tabac ASIA

Dear Mayor of Dortmund, Mr Ullrich Sierau,

Through our international contacts it has come to our attention that a company owned by the City of Dortmund (The Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH) is helping to promote tobacco trade in Indonesia by organizing the Inter-tabac ASIA which takes place on 27/28 February 2014 in Bali, Indonesia.

The involvement of a company owned by a European city in supporting the tobacco trade is both perplexing and a cause for concern. It is to the credit of many of Dortmunds citizens that there has been such widespread condemnation of the involvement of a publicly owned company in such an enterprise.

Being the sole shareholder of Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH, the city of Dortmund bears responsibility for the use of its name to promote a product that the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates kills 6 million people every year.

You must be aware that Indonesia is a country that lacks enforceable regulation of tobacco consumption and that campaigners in Indonesia look to Europe for guidance and moral support to fully implement the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in their country. A country where advertising campaigns have led to an increase in smoking prevalence amongst boys aged 13-15 to more than 40%, according to WHO.

Tobacco products are manufactured using abusive child labour, in Indonesia and other major tobacco producing countries. By supporting Inter-tabac ASIA, Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH and by association, the city of Dortmund (a proclaimed fair trade city) is effectively condoning the use of child labour and helping to promote an addiction which kills.

ASH Scotland is an organisation working to reduce the burden of disease and harm caused by tobacco in Scotland and local government takes the issue of smoking very seriously. ASH Scotland would not normally comment on matters outside of the UK but this particular issue, the involvement of a public company in promoting a lethal product, led us to write and express our concerns.

As Mayor of the City of Dortmund you have a moral responsibility to:

- Stop the Inter-tabac ASIA
- Make sure that Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH does not organize tobacco trade fairs in Indonesia or any other country of the Global South in future
- Dissociate from the tobacco industry. Put public health over profits, in Indonesia and Europe

More than 5 million people are killed by smoking world-wide each year. It is the responsibility of all German (and Scottish) public bodies, through the FCTC, to dissociate from the tobacco industry and take steps to reduce the harm caused by tobacco production, marketing and consumption.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Duffy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheila Duffy

Chief Executive of ASH Scotland