

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6095/09  
by Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Reducing health risks for minors exposed to cigarette smoke environments

The introduction of legislation against smoking in public places in some Member States has proven itself to have had a quantifiable impact in terms of the reduction of passive smoking (see doi: 10.1136/tc.2006.018119). According to the World Health Organisation, the lowest level of exposure to fine particulate matter in suspension in air (PM2.5), as a 24-hour average, for which the risk of death through cardiopulmonary disease or lung cancer increases by a probability of over 95%, has been recorded at 25 milligrams per cubic metre of air. Studies (e.g. doi:10.1038/sj.jes7500601) show that, for just two cigarettes smoked inside a car, exposure to fine particulate matter in suspension, as a 24-hour average, could exceed 35 milligrams.

Under current legislation, passengers in private cars are only protected against the effects of passive smoking in one Member State (Cyprus). 79 449 deaths were attributed to passive smoking in the EU in 2002; passive smokers include minors, who have no say in matters affecting their own health; children and adolescents breathe more rapidly than adults which, in a smoky environment can result in their inhaling a greater quantity of smoke than adults, at a time when their body is still developing; minors who have been exposed to smoky environments present a higher rate of respiratory problems in adulthood than those who have not been exposed; the quantity of smoke in a private vehicle can be 10 to 30 times greater than the quantity of smoke in other enclosed areas.

In the light of the above, does the Commission plan to recommend to Member States a uniform Community-level approach to reducing these health risks, bearing in mind that not all Member States have adopted legislation of this type?