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REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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On 5 August 2007 the Act Amending the Restriction of the Use of Tobacco Products Act entered into force in Slovenia, prohibiting smoking in closed public areas and working places, including restaurants and bars. In Slovenia, smoking was prohibited in all public areas and working places by the previous act which entered into force in 1996. However, the old act allowed smoking in separate places of the restaurants and in small bars.

The amended act has two principal goals.

The first goal is total protection of the employees in all occupational groups against the exposure to harmful effects of the tobacco smoke at the workplace. The new act introduces total prohibition of smoking in all closed public areas and working places. A closed public or working place shall be a place with a roof or a covered ceiling and completely enclosed more than one half of the entire wall area. Smoking is also prohibited in the open areas besides the facilities in which educational activities, i.e. playgrounds and yards of such facilities. The Act allows smoking in separate smoking rooms of the accommodation facilities and other facilities that provide overnight stays, in the residential rooms of the old people's homes and in prisons, in separate smoking rooms of the psychiatric hospitals and in the rooms designed specifically for smoking – the so-called smoking rooms. These smoking rooms are a novelty introduced by this act; however, it is not allowed to bring or serve food and drinks in such rooms and they can comprise no more than 20% of the total area of the public or working place. Smoking rooms are not allowed in places to which total prohibition of smoking has applied so far, i.e. healthcare and educational institutions.

The second goal is to reduce the underage persons' accessibility to tobacco products. Slovenia was bound to introduce these amendments by the ratified World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The Act prohibits the purchase and sale of tobacco products by or to people under the age of 18.

The act introduces new information that needs to be put on the packaging of tobacco products besides the health warnings, namely the telephone number of the 'stop smoking help line'. This will provide quick assistance to the smokers who want to stop smoking and information on individual 'stop smoking' programmes.

Moreover, the act foresees fines for the violators which range from € 2,000 to € 33,000 for the legal entities, € 400 to € 1,000 for the responsible person of the legal entity, € 800 to € 4,000 for sole proprietors and € 125 for individuals.

There are three inspectorates in charge of exercising control over the implementation of the act. The Health Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia shall exercise control over the implementation of the prohibition of smoking in closed public areas, over the individuals violating the provisions on the prohibition of smoking in such areas and over the smoking rooms in public areas. The Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia shall exercise control over the prohibition of smoking in working places and over the smoking rooms in such places as well as over the individuals violating the provisions on the prohibition of smoking in working places. The Market Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia shall exercise control over the compliance with the age limit for both the buyers and the sellers of tobacco products.

The act has enjoyed a wide public support already during the public discussion, when nearly 80 percent of the survey participants expressed their support; according to the findings of the competent inspection services that have supervised the compliance with the new act all over Slovenia already on the first day, it was well accepted and complied with.