

## British MEP slams Farage's 'bizarre, dangerous and delusional' health proposals

Written by James O'Brien on 29 January 2015 in News  
News

MEP Nigel Farage has been accused of showing disregard for public health by advocating the return of smoking in public places and opposing plain-packaging for cigarettes.



The proposals by the co-president of parliament's EFDD group form part of the UK Independence party's (UKIP) manifesto for May's general election in the UK.

With fewer than 100 days remaining before Britain goes to the polls, a survey conducted for The Guardian newspaper showed the Eurosceptic party attracting 11 per cent of public support.

A smoking ban in enclosed spaces was introduced in England in 2007, having already been introduced in the rest of the UK. At present, 15 EU member states have implemented comprehensive smoke-free laws.

Farage said plans to introduce plain packaging for cigarettes would represent "an appalling intrusion

into consumer choice and the operation of the free market".

"Nigel Farage likes to come across as a man of the people, when in reality he's doing the bidding of the tobacco companies, regardless of the impact on people's health" - Glenis Willmott

The British MEP added that "jobs and tax revenue would suffer". Writing in the Independent newspaper, Farage accused his opponents of putting 66,000 jobs at risk and of planning "a major resurgence of the nanny-state ideals".

Glenis Willmott, a member of parliament's environment, public health and food safety (ENVI) committee strongly criticised Farage's proposals.

The S&D deputy said the comments showed "a shocking disregard for the health of the British public".

She added, "It is estimated smoking causes 100,000 deaths in the UK every year and costs the national health service an €2.6bn a year. With these startling figures in mind it is shocking that UKIP have announced plans to bring back smoking in public places."

The British Labour party MEP said that her party has "worked tirelessly" at UK and EU level "to bring about legislation to try to prevent thousands of deaths every year".

Willmott highlighted that "nearly one in two of all smokers will die from a smoking related illness and smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death".

She also said "these tobacco policies [...] highlight just how bizarre, dangerous and delusional UKIP are".

The ENVI committee member concluded, "Nigel Farage likes to come across as a man of the people, when in reality he's doing the bidding of the tobacco companies, regardless of the impact on people's health."

Ireland, the UK, Greece, Bulgaria, Malta, Spain and Hungary have the strictest provisions in place, with a complete ban on smoking in enclosed public places, on public transport and in workplaces.

In March 2004, Ireland became the first country in the world to introduce a smoking ban in enclosed public places.

The Eurobarometer survey of public attitudes in the EU shows 84 per cent of citizens support smoke-free workplaces, although this falls to 61 per cent who favour a ban on smoking in bars.

## **About the author**

James O'Brien is a journalist and editorial assistant for the Parliament Magazine

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