



Forest

Voice of the smoker in Ireland

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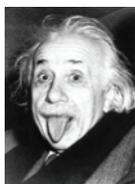
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NEWSLETTER

HEALTHY IRELAND RESULTS?



Wasn't it this guy who said insanity was doing something over and over and expecting a different result?

Well, after five successive years of tobacco excise increases, the Department of Health's own Healthy Ireland Survey 2016 confirms absolutely no significant change in smoking behaviours.

Healthy Ireland Survey Results 2016

Smoking

- 23% of the population are current smokers. 19% smoke daily and 4% smoke occasionally

Healthy Ireland Survey Results 2015

Smoking

- 23% of the Irish population aged 15 and over are smokers. 19% are daily and 4% are occasional smokers

Given that Budget 2017 singled out smokers as the only group worthy of an instant hit – a source of seemingly great hilarity in the Dáil chamber when announced, when is the Government going to recognise the insanity and admit that its lazy policy of continuing to lump excise onto tobacco, on the premise that it'll make any difference, is simply incorrect?

HYPER-REGULATION BROADENS ITS REACH IN IRELAND



Forest Ireland has, for many years, warned of the likelihood that the anti-smoking brigade would run out of enthusiasm (or, more likely, funding) at some point and move on to target other unfortunates. And here we are – with booze and fizzy pop firmly in their sights.

Watch how (like Madonna) the old reliable “public health ground” will now reinvent and contort itself into the basis for all manner of crazy things.

Oh wait. Booze burkas i.e. perhaps the greatest ever insult to our collective intelligence and the most baffling attempt ever by elected representatives to treat their employers like very, very bold children.

Well, since the witch hunting of smokers, that is.

CENSORED

ANTI-TRANSPARENCY AND THE UN

Every 3rd May is the UN decreed World Press Freedom Day. It's been on the go since 1993 and this year it focused on “freedom of information as a fundamental freedom and as a human right” and “protecting press freedom from censorship and surveillance overreach”. That's nice. Shame it's blatantly untrue.

Journalists were either banished or, if non-compliant, physically removed from the UN/WHO's 7th Conference of the Parties held in New Delhi last month¹.

Things didn't start well. Hundreds of Indian tobacco farmers were rounded up and escorted to the police station in order to silence their peaceful attempts to voice well-grounded fears for their livelihoods.

Things didn't improve either. In what must have seemed like the ultimate insult to its famously health conscious delegates, the bash was held in smog so thick it was visible from space². Media reported people wearing masks outside, coughing and wheezing at registration and beelines being made for the safety of the air con. (Hope nobody dared to light a cigarette outside the front door. That would have been a real calamity.)

A proposal during the first plenary - that the media be banned from the conference to "have discussions in private" - was carried without any objection. That means that none of the 180 nations which are signatories to the treaty (and who were represented at the meeting) objected to the media being banned from reporting on the discussion, debate and making of law. It means that delegates were either passively or very purposely endorsing a process whereby laws can be discussed, debated and made behind closed doors. Most depressingly of all...it means that Ireland went along with it.

"Journalists are responsible for informing the public about the decisions such large international bureaucracies make [...] How can this be done if the media is kicked out the second the real issues are discussed?"

"Every citizen should be concerned about what the WHO is up to."

- Yaël Ossowski, PanAm Post



JOHN MALLON - A VOICE OF FREEDOM

We're delighted to report that Forest Ireland spokesman John Mallon was honoured at the Forest Freedom Dinner in London earlier this year when he received a special Voices of Freedom Award.

The Freedom Dinner was launched in 2011. Each year over 150 guests including MPs, journalists and

parliamentary researchers gather at Boisdale of Canary Wharf. A drinks reception on the smoking terrace is followed by dinner in the main restaurant and after dinner speeches.

Other winners of the inaugural Voices of Freedom Awards were Rod Liddle (associate editor of The Spectator, Sunday Times columnist and former editor of BBC Radio 4's Today programme), Chris Snowdon (head of Lifestyle Economics at the Institute of Economic Affairs and author of Velvet Glove Iron Fist: A History of Anti-Smoking) and Claire Fox (founder of the Institute of Directors and author of I Find That Offensive!).

John was recognised for his work in Ireland dating back to 2003 when, during the lead-in to the workplace smoking ban, he began communicating his concerns to newspapers and radio stations. He continues that to this day, showing grace under fire in what is often an extremely hostile environment.

Maith thú John!

¹ The WHO is the public health arm of the UN. The conference is the law making body of the WHO's tobacco control treaty called the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control/FCTC.

² http://mashable.com/2016/11/08/new-delhi-smog-visible-from-space/#c_MGbTDPn8qK