COMMENT FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF THE EUROPEAN CANCER LEAGUES (ECL) TO THE WHO PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE GLOBAL TOBACCO CONTROL CONVENTION

SUBMITTER
The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) is a non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian association. All full members, 38 in all, are members of the International Union against Cancer (UICC).

ACTIVITIES
The main fields of activity are cancer prevention, public education., professional education, service and rehabilitation, fundraising and advocacy.

INTEREST IN THE FCTC
The ECL sees international tobacco control imperative as problems and products travel without passport.

FUNDING
ECL is funded by membership fees. All the members are national non-governmental cancer organisations. In 1999 and 2000 it has organised programs partly funded by the EU Commission.

The internal documents of the tobacco industry made available in adjunct of several court cases, have revealed an astonishing array of activities over past decades. The arrogance and brashness of the tobacco industry is beyond comparison.

The tobacco industry has know for decades the addictive nature of nicotine in cigarettes. They have know for decades that this is the reason they have any customers. Among the many projects aimed to ensure constant accrual of new and maintenance of regular tobacco users, were those looking for nicotine boosting additives (e.g. ammonia) and ways to increase the nicotine content of cigarettes.

In one of the most appalling projects by Brown & Williamson/BAT, genetic engineering was used to develop a tobacco plant (code name Y-1) with very high nicotine content. The raw material was used to manufacture cigarettes, which were
marketed in several countries including England, France, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, and Finland. All this was done in secrecy with absolutely no information given to the national regulatory agencies or customers.

The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) urges to take strong action in the future against activities described above.

Liisa Elovainio, Secretary General
President of the Association of European Cancer Leagues