

PROJECT PROPOSAL

PROF. DR. KLAUS GRETSCHMANN

15 Sept 2016

1. TOPIC

“Harm Reduction and Risk Reduced Products: Fresh Arguments and Recommendations – Ensuring Innovation and Social Welfare between unfettered laissez-faire and radical prohibition”

2. OBJECTIVE

- (a) To develop convincing and non-standard, unorthodox arguments emphasizing the innovation capacity of harm reduction (RRP) approaches as opposed to full and radical prohibition.*
- (b) To roll-out fresh and interesting arguments beyond the traditional legal (property rights and trademark policy), regulatory and macro arguments (jobs, growth etc.) in favor of a new product policy not least in tobacco.*
- (c) To present the results of “deep thinking” in a format which is attractive, innovative, non-trivial and compelling to high level decision makers and the general public in order to overcome ideological and political obstacles to innovation and to initiate new avenues to product policies and related health and sustainability concerns.*
- (d) Arguments in favor of a third way between unfettered laissez-faire and radical prohibition/regulation will be scrutinized with regard to the innovation capacity and welfare of polities and societies!*

3. BACKGROUND

Studies commissioned by industry are under suspicion of being influenced by and have been repeatedly sidelined and ignored by relevant national and international (EU) decision makers. In order to avoid such ex-ante stigmatization a more neutral – scientific – approach is badly needed. This implies that (a) the arguments need be on firm theoretical grounds in economic theory and policy; (b) the pros and cons are equally considered and (c) micro and macro-economic considerations in favor of a third way between unfettered laissez-faire and radical prohibition/regulation need be pondered.

Harm reduction is a philosophy intended to be an alternative to prohibition of high-risk lifestyle choices. At the core of harm reduction is the acknowledgment that some people will always be engaged in behaviors that carry risks, like intravenous drug use, unsafe sex, smoking etc. A harm reduction approach attempts to lessen the consequences of such behavior when eliminating the behavior altogether is not realistic. Harm reduction (HR) refers to any measure that reduces harm (such as illness and death) caused by the use of products, activities and behavior. This could mean reducing the availability of, access to, and affordability of such products or practices, or switching from more harmful to less harmful novel ones. It involves changes in the design, composition and manufacture of products and thus involves “innovations” of different kinds.

4. MISSION AND PRIMARY GOALS

- 1. Develop and put forward fresh arguments in the debate of the pros and cons of HR and RRP (Risk Reduced Products)*
- 2. Submit a set of compelling recommendations to policy-makers and decision-takers*
- 3. Roll-out a communication strategy and a nudging approach to increase social and political acceptance*

5. SECONDARY GOALS

- 1. Identify ways and means to overcome obstacles and resistance to innovation and scrutinize HR strategies.*
- 2. Pinpoint the role of product and service variety for the proper functioning of market economies and as a pre-requisite of competition policy.*
- 3. Elaborate on why prohibition approaches fail and why resilient strategies (such as HR and RRP) are superior.*
- 4. Reappraise the usefulness of tax subsidies in favor of RRP.*
- 5. Present the results of “deep thinking” in a format which is attractive, innovative, non-trivial and compelling to high level decision makers and the general public in order to overcome ideological and political obstacles to innovation and to initiate new avenues to product polices and related health and sustainability concerns.*