

**ENOUGH  
IS ENOUGH**



**FOREST  
ÉIREANN  
MANIFESTO  
2011**

**SMOKERS ARE  
VOTERS TOO**

# ONE MILLION SMOKERS

There are one million smokers in Ireland - a third of the adult population. Smokers contribute €1.5 billion per annum to the Revenue in tobacco duty alone.

Ignoring their rights as law-abiding citizens, government has:

- banned smoking in every pub and bar
- banned the display of tobacco in shops
- increased tobacco duty to record levels
- excluded smokers from the political process

## Impact of Ireland's tobacco control policies

Since the smoking ban was introduced in 2004, more than 1000 pubs have closed.<sup>1</sup> Many more have reduced their opening hours. Publicans have lost customers and bar workers have lost their jobs.

Smokers are forced to stand outside or remain at home. Those hardest hit include the elderly, many of whom used to enjoy a drink and a smoke in their local bar. Now reports suggest that loneliness is a major cause of ill health – worse, it is said, than lifelong smoking.<sup>2</sup>

Record levels of duty have forced the price of tobacco sky high. No wonder that nearly a third of smokers avoid buying tobacco, and paying Irish duty, in Irish shops.

Government policy has created an enormous black market. Tobacco control? You're kidding. Criminal gangs sell cigarettes to anyone, including children.

The display ban was introduced with little or no evidence that it will reduce smoking rates. Consumers are entitled to view a full product range without having to ask for something that is hidden "under the counter".

Since the introduction of the smoking ban in 2004, the smoking rate has gone up, after decades in decline, to 29 per cent of the adult population.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this record of failure, tobacco control campaigners now want picture warnings on packets of cigarettes. They want to ban smoking in private vehicles, ban smoking in some outdoor areas, and "denormalise" smoking and adults who smoke.

# = ONE MILLION VOTERS

Enough is enough.

Ireland's tobacco control policies have been a disaster for tolerance, courtesy and common sense.

Government must review the way smokers are treated and devise policies that are fair for everyone, smokers and non-smokers alike.

Forest Éireann asks for respect, fairness and inclusion instead of abuse, alienation and exclusion. We urge the new Government to:

- respect the rights of adults who have made an informed choice to smoke tobacco in full knowledge of the health risks associated with this legal product
- acknowledge that the overwhelming majority of smokers are ordinary, decent, law-abiding adults whose habit does not affect their ability to make a positive contribution to Irish society
- relax the smoking ban so that pubs and bars can provide smoking rooms that allow adults to smoke in greater comfort without bothering non-smokers
- cut tobacco duty to tackle smuggling and reduce the temptation to buy tobacco abroad
- recognise the major financial contribution made by consumers who buy tobacco from legitimate retailers in Ireland
- review the use of public money to fund groups and quangos dedicated to persecuting adult smokers
- engage with the consumer so that one million smokers no longer feel ignored and disenfranchised from the political process
- treat one million voters with the respect they deserve

<sup>1</sup> Smoking gun: is the smoking ban a major cause of the decline of the British and Irish pub? (CR Consulting, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> Loneliness worse than smoking, Irish Examiner (2nd February 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health SLAN report (Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition in Ireland)

# SMOKERS' MANIFESTO

Forest Éireann was launched in August 2010 to give smokers in Ireland the voice they have previously been denied.

Our primary purpose is to defend the interests of adults who choose to smoke tobacco in full knowledge of the health risks associated with this legal product.

Our spokesman is John Mallon, a smoker and father of two adult children who lives with his partner in Cork.

Commenting on the challenge ahead, John says: "The anti-smoking movement has gone too far. Unwittingly, perhaps, some well-meaning campaigners are making many smokers' lives a misery.

"We support restrictions on public smoking but to ban smoking in every bar without exemption was unnecessary and draconian. The tobacco display ban and proposals to introduce picture warnings on packets and ban smoking in private vehicles suggest a movement that doesn't know when to stop.

"But our manifesto is not just about smoking. It's about excessive government intervention in people's daily lives, and that affects everybody, smokers and non-smokers alike.

"What next? Will it be alcohol? Sweets? Crisps? Fizzy drinks?

"If people do not fight for their rights a host of other restrictions will surely follow. I urge like-minded people to support our manifesto and together we can make a difference."



**SMOKERS!  
HAVE YOUR SAY  
REGISTER YOUR SUPPORT**

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