



**UNITAB**

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## Press release

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October 18, 2010

### ***European farmers call on the EU to put a stop to WHO's recommendation to ban ingredients***

European tobacco farmers gathered at the 32nd UNITAB Congress in Poland, to call on European authorities to back their farmers and oppose the World Health Organization's (WHO) proposal to ban ingredients in cigarettes, as well as a set of recommendations on crop diversification. In a Resolution adopted on October 15 by representatives of 90,000 farmers, UNITAB warned the EU institution that endorsing the WHO proposals could put approximately 70,000 farmers out of work with no improvement for public health whatsoever.

Most tobacco farmers across Europe grow Burley and Oriental tobacco which require ingredients to balance the taste of these leaves in blended cigarettes. Banning ingredients, as proposed under guidelines for articles 9 and 10 of the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC), would see demand for those crops virtually disappear. Another set of recommendations, articles 17 and 18 of the FCTC, are meant to provide viable crop alternatives to tobacco growing, but offer no feasible options for tobacco farmers. The impact of these proposals on farmers, their families and the economies of many countries that rely on tobacco export would be dramatic.

"Tobacco farmers already face the phase out of subsidies under the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)," says Francois Vedel, Delegate Secretary of UNITAB. "The WHO is now pushing governments and the EU to adopt radical regulation that simply does not make sense whichever way you look at it. The fact that we are not even consulted is unacceptable and the reason for this Resolution."

The Resolution lays out several points, clearly stating that farmers support a reasonable approach to tobacco control but oppose excessively restrictive regulation which would eliminate thousands of jobs without improving public health. The document also calls on EU governments and institutions to immediately start a dialogue with farmers and to take into account the vulnerable situation of thousands of families, who have no economically viable alternatives, before they act.

Grower associations throughout Europe will be sending this Resolution to their respective governments and to the EU Commission, calling on them to measure the devastating social and economic impact of the WHO recommendation and to put a stop to it before it's too late.

*UNITAB is the International Union of tobacco farmers. It represents nearly 85,000 tobacco farmers across Europe.*

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