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Our comment on the cigarette plain packaging consultation [1]

Written by **Sam Bowman** [2] | Monday 16 April 2012

"Cigarette plain packaging laws are an illiberal, authoritarian attempt at social engineering. What?s more, they probably won?t work.

"Adults should be free to smoke and to advertise their cigarettes as they choose. The consultation makes no mention at all of civil liberties or individual responsibility. The government assumes, wrongly, that its job is to control the behaviour of adults.

"There is no evidence to suggest that plain packaging laws will reduce smoking rates. At the most, they will drive smoking underground. Already, one in nine cigarettes smoked around the world is counterfeit or smuggled, and the standardisation of cigarette packs would be a counterfeiter?s dream come true.

"Most worryingly, plain packaging laws for cigarettes will lead to similar proposals for things like alcohol and fatty foods. As soon as plain packaging laws were passed in Australia, the public health lobby began demanding that the cigarette industry be forced to make cigarettes ?foul tasting?. The British Commons health select committee is already considering plain packaging laws for alcohol.

"Health fascism is alive and well. Plain packaging is a massive step for the nanny state, and smokers and non-smokers alike who value consumer choice and individual responsibility should oppose it."

? Sam Bowman, Head of Research. Read the ASI's report on plain packaging by Christopher Snowdon, published earlier this year: *Plain Packaging: Commercial expression, anti-smoking extremism and the risks of hyper-regulation.* [3]

To contact the Adam Smith Institute for further comment, phone 0207-222-4995 or email info@adamsmith.org[4].

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