

Despite many difficulties in operating among the crowds present at the marathon itself, the green ribbons and petitions were welcomed enthusiastically and received much media coverage. Subsequently, it has been reported on television that the marathon committee is seriously considering making the marathon smoke-free next year, and even divesting itself of tobacco company sponsors. As if in a show of strength, Seven Wolves flew a large promotional airship all over Xiamen for the week following the marathon.

Future tasks of the group include trying to help Xiamen university to go smoke-free, but already there are signs that the influence of tobacco interests may first have to be overcome. At a prestigious concert featuring many famous singers on campus recently, the Seven Wolves company was in evidence. But offers started coming in from pro-health allies, including a well known singer and a TV personality. Now the expanding group is redoubling its work towards a smoke-free China.

B VIERTHALER

Green Breathing Association, Xiamen University, China; bv@badvertising.org

Lebanon: business as usual

In December 2005 Lebanon ratified the World Health Organization's Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) with little fanfare by the government and no coverage by the local media, and so far it seems that the tobacco industry is behaving just as it did before (*Tobacco Control* 2006;15:80–1).

While the tobacco industry remains under the control of a government monopoly, the *Regie*—which has the exclusive right to import/export local tobacco products and issue licences to tobacco growers—competition for market share within this substantial and growing market remains fierce among the transnational tobacco companies. In 2002 Philip Morris, British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International and the French-Spanish company Altadis held 93% of the cigarette market. Altadis alone now holds more than 10% of the Lebanese market, which it describes as “outstanding”. Smoking prevalence is 46% for adult males and 35% for adult females, among the highest rates for females in the region; 8.3% of 13–15 year olds are current cigarette smokers (12.1% of boys and 5.6% of girls).

Just one of the cigarette promotions taking place in February was held at a car rally and ski race at the Faqra Club mountain resort, and was part-spon-



Young women dressed in Gitanes branded jackets distributed free cigarettes before a car rally and ski race at the Faqra Club mountain resort in Lebanon.

sored by Altadis. The event featured cars branded with Gauloises and young women dressed in Gitanes branded jackets distributing free samples of cigarettes before the race. The event was advertised on posters throughout Lebanese university campuses. While the distribution of free samples to people under 18 years old has been prohibited in Lebanon since 1995, the young women were not seen checking the age of the recipients. Interestingly, the distribution of free samples and university advertising would seem to violate Altadis's own code of conduct, which claims that marketing campaigns are directed only at adults, and “our advertising never depicts people under 25”. Most university students in Lebanon are 17–21 years old.

It is clear that the Lebanese government will need to act more concertedly than in the past to ensure compliance with the FCTC. The adoption of comprehensive legislation banning tobacco advertising, marketing and sponsorship, and its effective enforcement, is urgently needed in Lebanon. Without this change, it will simply be business as usual for the tobacco industry.

R NAKKASH

Beirut, Lebanon; rima.nakkash@lshtm.ac.uk

K LEE

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK; kelley.lee@lshtm.ac.uk

Spain: lessons of a not-so-smoke-free law

Under a law that came into force at the beginning of the year, smoking has been completely banned (not even allowing any smoking areas) in all workplaces in Spain, except in the hospitality and gambling sectors. There, depending on the size or where the premises are located, different regulations apply.

Some important lessons are emerging from this two-tier system.

The regulations allow the owners of bars and restaurants having a “useful surface for clients” smaller than 100 square metres to decide whether or not they allow smoking in their premises. They can also decide to have a partial ban, either by making separate areas according to the regulations for larger premises, or by putting up signs informing customers in which part of the premises (without physical barriers) smoking is permitted. There is no definition in the law about the meaning of “useful surface”, so owners tend to want as much useless surface as possible to avoid having to be considered a larger place. Most bars fall in this category, and most of them allow smoking, as they fear the loss of revenue.

In those bars and restaurants larger than 100 square metres of “useful surface” smoking is banned, but completely isolated smoking areas can be created, requiring good ventilation systems, and can occupy as much as 30% of the useful surface. If these changes are not carried out by 1 September this year, the entire premises must be smoke-free. This means some owners have to invest in reshaping the premises, or else ban smoking. Many say they do not understand why the law makes this difference.

Spain's regional governments have the right and duty to assure compliance to the new law, and can even improve the legislation within their territories (see Spain: going smoke free. *Tobacco Control* 2006;15:79–80). The first problem arose from the lack of time to understand, interpret and prepare guidelines for those affected by the law. It was published on 27 December 2005, and entered into force just days later, on 1 January 2006. More than three months later, regional governments were still setting guidelines, with some significant differences between regions.

The law lacks definitions of two concepts where interpretation is crucial, especially in the hospitality sector. Even after several meetings of tobacco control experts from the different Autonomous Communities, it has not been possible to get agreement. One concept not defined is “useful surface”, and the other has to do with premises where two different activities occur. For example, the law allows for up to 10% of the useful surface for smoking areas in bus or train stations and airports. To avoid the surface dedicated to bars or restaurants becoming the smoking area of such premises, the law introduces the concept of “different activities”, allowing