

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/a/az5qM/snuset-skulle-radda-355-000-liv--per-ar>

## Snus would save 355,000 lives - per year

Authors: **Gigantic health impact if the EU had used tobacco the way Sweden does**

Significantly fewer people die in tobacco-related diseases in Sweden than in any other EU country. We know what the difference is due to, the authors write.



DEBATE June 8<sup>th</sup> 03.00 CET

DEBATE. Significantly fewer people die from tobacco-related diseases in Sweden than in any other EU country. This is despite the fact that Swedes consume as much tobacco as do people in other EU countries. In fact, in 24 of the 27 other EU countries tobacco related mortality is more than twice as high as in Sweden.

**We know what this difference is due to. In Sweden we use snus and therefore we smoke less. Snus is certainly not a health product, but you do not die from using snus, but you do die from smoking. And that is a non-trivial difference that both the Swedish government and the rest of the EU, seem to find remarkably easy to disregard.**

The Snus Commission's third report published today, answers a very central issue in this context: How many lives would have been saved if the consumption of snus and cigarettes followed the same pattern in the EU, as in Sweden?

The results were more appalling than we could imagine. The study is based on a processing of epidemiological data on tobacco-related mortality from the WHO. The report shows how many deaths the different EU countries, plus Norway, would have if the rest of Europe switched from cigarettes to snus to the same extent as Sweden has done. The study looks at men over 30 years of age in each EU country. Men, because it's mainly men who have been using and are currently using, snus.

The figures show that 355,000 lives per year would have been saved if the EU used snus and smoked at levels like Sweden. Looking at the number of lives that could have been saved with a Swedish tobacco consumption, of course, the most populous countries come in at the top. The numbers are nevertheless startling:

In Poland - 46 730 people's lives had been saved every year. For Germany the figure is 44 473, for Italy 37 160. Britain then follows with 36 452, followed by France where 33 693 lives could have been saved, and so on.

If we instead look at mortality per 100,000 inhabitants, Sweden has the lowest with 152. The EU average is 373 lost lives per 100,000 inhabitants due to smoking. The highest, Hungary, lands at 699.

**It's not the accuracy of the exact numbers we need to focus on, but rather the orders of magnitude. Based on this, some conclusions can be drawn. Above all, it is surprising that the Swedish government does not seem to want to push the issue that the EU should abolish the obsolete decision to ban snus within the Union.**

**355,000 saved lives per year is a very strong reason.**

We argue that the time is just right to act on the snus issue. Secondly, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg is currently handling a case regarding snus sales in the UK, where Sweden is invited to be a referral body. And thirdly, the EU's fundamental rationale against snus has become obsolete.

When Sweden was given a permanent (national) derogation from banning snus in the EU negotiations, the EU rationale was that no new tobacco products should be allowed in the EU countries.

**This argument has now been made obsolete by the EU with the recent release of e-cigarettes into the EU market. There is extensive epidemiological research on the snus, not at all equally available for e-cigarettes. A proven product to save the lives of smokers is kept banned, while a different and unexplored product gets the go-ahead.**

**So, Stefan Löfven and Annika Strandhäll, don't miss this opportunity! Do seize the opportunity and tell the EU that they banned the wrong tobacco product.**

Unless Sweden informs the EU about the relative difference in danger between cigarettes and the snus, who will? Here also, the government and relevant authorities have a responsibility towards their own citizens. In 2016, Ipsos research asked the Swedish people how dangerous it was to smoke compared to using snus. Every fourth Swedish person thought it was equally dangerous. Among women, that proportion was 45 percent.

**In the EU countries, there is absolutely no way of knowing what the facts really look like. Namely that snus can save lives. Because nobody has told anyone.**

If our authorities had done their information work at home, and the government done so at EU level, the Snus Commission wouldn't have been necessary at all.

But now here we are and we plan to continue, simply because it is so much more important to save lives than protect old principles.

Anders Milton  
Christina Bellander  
Karl-Olof Fagerström  
Göran Johnsson

Underlying report in English for download here: [http://snuskommissionen.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Snuskommissionen\\_rapport3\\_eng\\_PRINT.pdf](http://snuskommissionen.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Snuskommissionen_rapport3_eng_PRINT.pdf)

Translated by Erik Atakan Befrits of NNA Sweden and INNCO.org and all mistakes are my own. The translator has no affiliations or ties to the Snus Commission or any industry entities, and our organisations raise no issue with article 5.3 of the FCTC.

([ab@innco.org](mailto:ab@innco.org) - 0046 764 156046)