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## **Buenos Aires City Smokefree Law Approved**

**Mexico City, 14 December 2010** — At 10 pm last night, the City Legislature of Buenos Aires overwhelmingly passed a city-wide smokefree law, which will protect its 13 million citizens from the dangers of second-hand smoke. Since July 2010, The Union has been working with the Ministry of Health for the City of Buenos Aires to support the development and adoption of an amended smokefree law.

Under the amended law, bars, restaurants, shopping malls and all enclosed public spaces (including workplaces) in Buenos Aires will be 100% smokefree. This law amends earlier legislation that allowed smoking rooms in many of these establishments. Smoking rooms will no longer be allowed under the law.

The revised legislation should be read as an important achievement of the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use (BI) which funds the Ministry of Health project under a grant managed by The Union. Earlier this year, the Ministry of Health launched a campaign to generate public and political consensus on the need to modify the law.

Union staff worked closely with Ministry staff to draft the amendments and inform legislators of the evidence in favour of smokefree environments. The Union also provided technical support to carry out and disseminate the results of a public opinion poll. 93% of those polled were aware of the dangers of tobacco and 76% of people supported the ban.

The Ministry of Health also conducted research into the indirect costs of tobacco-related medical care in Buenos Aires. According to their findings, 12% of health service costs in the city are attributable to tobacco-related diseases. This equates to 124 million USD (493 million Argentinean pesos).

The Ministry of Health carried out many public events in the city to bring public attention to the issues. Local media interest in the research and legislation proposed by the Ministry of Health was considerable.

Involvement of civil society members and political allies has played a pivotal role in raising awareness of the need for an amended law. However, support from the Government, through the Ministry of Health and The Union, was crucial in the recent development. Over the past six months, debate on the issue increased significantly, culminating in the vote last night in the plenary of the Congress. Thirty-four votes were counted in favour of the bill, four against, with seven abstentions.

**PRESS RELEASE**

Until yesterday, Buenos Aires had lagged behind other Latin American cities in terms of smokefree implementation. The decision last night remedies this and is liable to encourage other local and national governments in Latin America to adopt similar legislation.

The grant to the Ministry of Health is the first Union-managed BI grant to be awarded for a tobacco control project in Argentina. The grants programme of the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use is managed by The Union and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. It seeks to develop and deliver high-impact evidence-based tobacco control interventions in low- and middle-income countries by working with local partners.

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**More about the Buenos Aires Smokefree Campaign**

<http://www.theunion.org/news/buenos-aires-launches-smokefree-project-with-help-from-the-union.html>

[http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/salud/noticias/?modulo=ver&idioma=es&item\\_id=727&contenido\\_id=49566](http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/salud/noticias/?modulo=ver&idioma=es&item_id=727&contenido_id=49566)

<http://www.facebook.com/bsas.libredelhumo>

<http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/salud>

**More about The Union**

The mission of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is to bring innovation, expertise, solutions and support to address health challenges in low- and middle-income populations. Founded in 1920, The Union today is both a non-profit institute with five scientific departments and 14 offices worldwide and a federation of close to 3,000 organisations and individuals who are committed to the same goals. The Union headquarters are in Paris, and offices serve the Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America and South-East Asia regions. Its scientific departments focus on tuberculosis, HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and research; and each engages in research, provides technical assistance and offers training and other capacity-building activities leading to health solutions for the poor.

- To learn more about The Union, please visit [www.theunion.org](http://www.theunion.org)
- To learn more The Union's Department of Tobacco Control: [www.tobaccofreeunion.org](http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org)
- To learn more about the Bloomberg Grants: [www.tobaccocontrolgrants.org](http://www.tobaccocontrolgrants.org)

**About the Year of the Lung 2010**

The Year of the Lung 2010 is a campaign launched by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) to build awareness of the essential role the lungs play in health and the toll taken by lung diseases. For more information, please visit [www.yearofthelung.org](http://www.yearofthelung.org)

