

February 16, 2015

Rhetoric trumps science?

(Saarbrücken, Germany) We – Prof. Kaul from the [IPE Institute for Policy Evaluation](http://www.ipe-saarland.de) Saarland & Department of Economics at Saarland University and Prof. Wolf from the Department of Economics at the University of Zurich – ask the anti-smoking organization OxyRomandie and its president Mr. Diethelm to stop their defamatory campaign against us and the University of Zurich.

OxyRomandie and its president have every right to advocate for a policy they support, but they should not have to resort to inflammatory rhetoric and unsubstantiated claims, which do nothing to advance an important academic debate.

As we have demonstrated in our detailed reply to OxyRomandie, the authors of OxyRomandie's critique of our work (i) show a surprising lack of basic statistical knowledge and (ii) make a series of false statements about the content of our two working papers. [<http://www.ipe-saarland.de/english/news/>]

We regret that instead of engaging on the scientific substance of our reply, OxyRomandie apparently has decided to seek refuge in further aggressive rhetoric, now claiming that there is a “strong suspicion of scientific fraud”. Such conduct should be beneath any serious academic, and we ask OxyRomandie to withdraw these baseless accusations.

To be sure, tobacco is an unpopular industry and plain packaging a controversial political topic, but the data are the data and standard statistical methods remain the same regardless of the topic to which they are applied. We therefore welcome the initiative of the University of Zurich to ask an external expert to make an assessment of our studies and the criticisms leveled against them.

For further information please contact:

Prof. Dr. Ashok Kaul
IPE Institut für Politikevaluation GmbH
Saarbrücken, Germany
Phone: +49 611 1470820
Email: info@ipe-saarland.de