

Uruguay

Overall score:

34

Summary of Findings

1. Industry participation in policy development

The government does not accept, support or endorse any offer for assistance by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry in setting or implementing public health policies in relation to tobacco control. The government does not allow/invite the tobacco industry to sit in government interagency/multi-sectoral committee/advisory group bodies that set public health policy.

The Uruguay delegation to the Conference of the Parties (COP) and other WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)-related meetings has not included representatives from the tobacco industry.

2. Industry CSR activities

Tobacco-related CSR activities are banned in Uruguay per Law 17.793 (2004) that approved the Framework Agreement for Tobacco Control and Law 18.256 (2008), which is the National Tobacco Control Law.

3. Benefits to the industry

There is no evidence that the government accommodates requests from the tobacco industry but the tobacco industry managed to counter President Vazquez's effort to speed up plain packaging implementation. The approval of Law 19.723 canceled the presidential decree and postponed the entry into force of the plain packaging until December 2019.

International travelers are still allowed to bring in duty free tobacco; the quantity varies with non-residential travelers being able to bring in more tobacco than residents.

4. Unnecessary interaction

Top level government officials do not meet with tobacco companies. Contacts are only made with the tobacco industry if strictly necessary and in the presence of representatives of civil society.

5. Transparency

The President and Ministry of Public Health do not meet with tobacco industry. However, this may not be the case with other departments such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance. There is no regulation establishing meeting disclosure.

Tobacco companies are banned from financing political parties. However, during the last electoral campaign, one of the parties declared having been financed by Monte Paz, one of the largest tobacco company in Uruguay with US \$15,000.

6. Conflict of interest

The government does not prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry. There is no evidence that current officials or retired senior government officials joined the tobacco industry.

7. Preventive measures

The Ministry of Health has a procedure for disclosing the records of the interaction (such as agendas, attendees, minutes and outcomes) with the tobacco industry and its representatives. The government, as a whole, has not formulated a policy nor adopted any code of conduct for officials as well as disclosure of records in their dealings with the tobacco industry.



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Recommendations

While overall Uruguay has good tobacco control measures in place and makes efforts to withstand challenges from the tobacco industry, there is still room for improvement to prevent the tobacco industry's influence over vulnerable sectors. Hence, efforts related to Article 5.3 can be strengthened further:

1. A code of conduct that applies to all government officials when dealing with the tobacco industry must be implemented.
2. The tobacco industry must be required to submit information on marketing expenditures or other activity such as lobbying, political contributions and all other activities.