

Italy



Summary of Findings

I. INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

There is no law or policy decision in place or currently being considered that controls the influence of tobacco industry (TI) in setting or implementing public health policies in relation to tobacco control. The TI is able to influence policy and has actively sought partnership between Philip Morris International (PMI) and the European House Ambrosetti - an influential strategic lobbying agency.

In 2021 British American Tobacco (BAT) Italy lobbied to neutralize unfavorable legislation and approached members of Parliament and the government. This finding emerged from the disclosures filed with the closing of the investigation into the Open Foundation, the foundation of the former Italian prime Minister Renzi.

While the TI does not sit in an official committee, the government allows TI lobbyists to represent industry interests. The main transnational tobacco companies, including Japan Tobacco International, PMI and BAT, are all registered in the formal government register of lobbyists.

2. INDUSTRY CSR ACTIVITIES

“BeLeaf: Be The Future” is the call for innovation launched by Philip Morris in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development, aimed at national and international start-ups, spin-offs, and small-to-medium enterprises that have developed technologies and solutions applicable to the “agritech” sector and in particular related to the cultivation, harvesting, and processing of tobacco.

Philip Morris Institute for Manufacturing Competences (PM IMC) is the new Philip Morris center for higher education and skills development. Several institutions and academic entities are involved in the realization of the Philip Morris

IMC, including Emilia-Romagna Region and the University of Bologna, a public institution.

PMI Italy donated EUR €1 million to the Italian Civil Protection to activate its supply chain in Italy to help face the COVID-19 emergency.

3. BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

Health Minister Orazio Schillaci proposed new restrictions on vaping and heated tobacco products. Several government officials, including Matteo Salvini the leader of one of the main parties of the current coalition in power, attacked the new restrictions which consequently were never implemented. This party was recorded to have received funding from e cigarette companies.

The government did not ratify the European Union Directive of 29 June 2022 aimed at withdrawing certain exemptions from heated tobacco products (HTPs). In Italy, HTPs have huge fiscal and regulatory benefits that are not evidence-based.

4. UNNECESSARY INTERACTION

Major TI tobacco industry companies declare to be side by side with Italian institutions and law enforcement agencies in the fight against the illicit cigarette trade. All the transnational tobacco companies offer assistance on enforcement, including tools or ways to prevent among others illicit trades and tobacco access to minors

Philip Morris guarantees to purchase Italian tobacco for the next five years. PMI will invest up to EUR €500 million over five years (2023-2027) in Italy's agricultural tobacco supply chain, committing to purchase 21,000 tons of raw tobacco each year. This is the highest investment by a private company on Italian tobacco farming.



BAT Italia has signed a three-year memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry to purchase high-quality Italian tobacco. BAT announced, by 2023, an investment of up to EUR €60 million to purchase 15,000 tons of Italian tobacco.

The agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and Manifatture Sigaro Toscana for the purchase of Kentucky tobacco will cover three years of production, from 2022 to the end of 2025, and will guarantee the purchase of a minimum of 2,200 tons of tobacco each year; worth precisely about EUR €20 million annually.

5. TRANSPARENCY

Italian ministries, of particular note the agricultural, economy and finance, and economic development ministries, and their agencies do not publicly disclose any meeting or interaction with the TI. Even where such interactions are strictly necessary for regulation. Only the Ministry of Health officially discloses meetings with the TI. There is however a repository of the official meetings between TI lobbyists and deputies for transparency purposes.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no guidelines from the government on the implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3. The government does not prohibit contributions from the TI or any entity working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns or to require full disclosure of such contributions.

7. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

There are repositories to track official meetings between industry lobbyists, including tobacco lobbyists, and deputies. From those records, only the list of attendees is present. However, no procedure is in place for disclosing the minutes and the outcome of such meetings.

The government has not formulated, adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials, prescribing the standards with which they should comply in their dealings with the TI.