

Georgia

**TOBACCO
INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE
INDEX 2025**

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Background and Introduction

Georgia is a European country with a population of 3.7 million¹ that ratified the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) on May 15, 2006.²

On May 17, 2017, Georgia adopted comprehensive tobacco control legislation in alignment with the core provisions of the WHO FCTC and its implementation guidelines. The law came into full effect on May 1, 2018, marking a significant milestone in the country's public health policy.

Key components of this legislation include a nationwide ban on smoking in all enclosed public spaces, workplaces, and public transport. This prohibition extends not only to traditional tobacco products, such as cigarettes and cigars, but also to novel products like electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs). While a few narrowly defined exemptions remain, the policy is among the most stringent in the region. In addition, Georgia has enacted a complete ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS). This includes a prohibition on direct and indirect marketing, event sponsorships, and brand placement. Furthermore, the public display of tobacco products—both inside and outside retail outlets—is forbidden, reducing the visibility and accessibility of these products, particularly to minors.³ Plain tobacco packaging regulation entered into force on April 1, 2025.⁴

The smoking prevalence in Georgia was 31% in 2016 and declined to 26% by 2023.^{5,6} In 2017, tobacco smoking was responsible for at least 11,400 deaths in Georgia. However, this number has shown a declining tendency in recent years due to a decrease in smoking rates.⁷

Following significant reforms and achievements, Georgia has emerged as one of the leading countries in tobacco control within the European Region. The World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe recognized this progress by producing a special documentary titled [“Uphill Battle”](#) which highlights Georgia's success story in implementing effective tobacco control measures.^{8,9} However, the fight is far from over. While industry influence was particularly intense in the period following the adoption of Georgia's comprehensive tobacco control measures in May 2017, industry influence is still happening. This report highlights ongoing interference by the tobacco industry (TI) over the past two years: 2023-2025.

A key challenge for Georgia in enacting comprehensive tobacco control is putting Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and its guidelines into practice. Specifically, a draft decree on “Protecting the State Policy Related to Tobacco Control in Public Institutions and Establishing the Rule of Communication of State Servants with the Tobacco Industry,” designed to shield tobacco control policies in public institutions and regulate communication between state officials and the tobacco industry has been awaiting Government approval since its initial preparation in 2018 and subsequent renewal in 2022. This delay is largely attributed to the tobacco industry's significant influence on the Georgian Government.

Between 2021 and 2025, the tobacco industry (TI) engaged politicians and health professionals in promoting novel tobacco/nicotine products using a “tobacco harm reduction” marketing strategy.

On May 29, 2024, the Parliament of Georgia approved a 50% tax reduction on raw tobacco, chewing tobacco, snus, and hookah tobacco. We assume that the proposal was lobbied by local manufacturers such as Tbilisi Tobacco, particularly concerning raw tobacco and hookah tobacco. In contrast, the inclusion of snus and chewing tobacco reflected the interests of Philip Morris International (PMI), which has been seeking to introduce its snus/nicotine pouches products to the Georgian market. The new rate came into effect on June 13, 2024. As a result, the tax decreased from approximately USD 24 per kilogram on above mentioned products to USD 12 per kilogram.¹⁰

The TI and its allies also successfully delayed the implementation of plain tobacco packaging regulations, pushing the initial deadline of January 1, 2018 to January 1, 2023, then to July 31, 2024, and ultimately to April 1, 2025.¹¹ Beginning April 1, 2025, the industry employed manipulative tactics by printing and distributing hundreds of thousands of cards displaying images of plain packaging. These cards were widely placed in front of old-style cigarette packs at retail outlets across Georgia, creating a false impression that all cigarette products were compliant with the plain packaging regulations.

Moreover, monitoring by the FCTC Implementation and Monitoring Centre in Georgia uncovered a letter dated April 24, 2025, from the "Magniti" supermarket network's head office. This letter instructed points of sale to only accept older-designed cigarettes from the distributor company "JJ 2011," and guaranteed that the distributor would cover any penalties incurred by the supermarket for violations.¹²

On May 1, 2025 the Business Ombudsman submitted a formal legislative amendment proposal to Parliament aimed at exempting cigarillos from plain packaging regulations and permit smoking of cigarillos in licensed cigar bars. Within two weeks, Members of Parliament registered this proposal as a legislative initiative. Tobacco Control Alliance of Georgia sent letters to the Chair of the Parliament and the Minister of Health, urging

¹ National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat). (2025). *Population and Demography*. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/316/population-and-demography>

² United Nations. (2006). 4. *WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control*. Retrieved June 20, 2025: https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IX-4&chapter=9&clang=_en

³ Law on "Tobacco Control", 4059-RS. 15/12/2010. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1160150?publication=17>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ National Center for Diseases Control and Public Health (NCDC). STEPS Survey, 2016. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://ncdc.ge/#/pages/file/4c558bf2-4b06-4fd6-a5af-5c98e85c321c>

⁶ WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2025: warning about the dangers of tobacco. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2025. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

⁷ National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia (NCDC). (2018). *The Case for Investing in WHO FCTC Implementation in Georgia*. UNDP. Retrieved June 20, 2025: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/The_Case_for_Investing_in_WHO_FCTC_Implementation_in_Georgia.pdf

⁸ The uphill battle: the story of Georgia's fight for a tobacco-free future. WHO, May 30, 2022. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/30-05-2022-the-uphill-battle--the-story-of-georgia-s-fight-for-a-tobacco-free-future>

⁹ George Bakhturidze. The impact assessment of law on tobacco control on health and economy of Georgia, December 2019. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://test.ncdc.ge/Handlers/GetFile.ashx?ID=92a34feb-3a6b-4895-b623-042279397f18>

¹⁰ Amendments on "Tax Code", N 4203-XIVMS-XMP, 29/05/2024. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6177582?publication=0>

¹¹ Law on "Tobacco Control", 4059-RS. 15/12/2010. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1160150?publication=17>

¹² Letter dated April 24, 2025, from the "Magniti" supermarket network's head office.

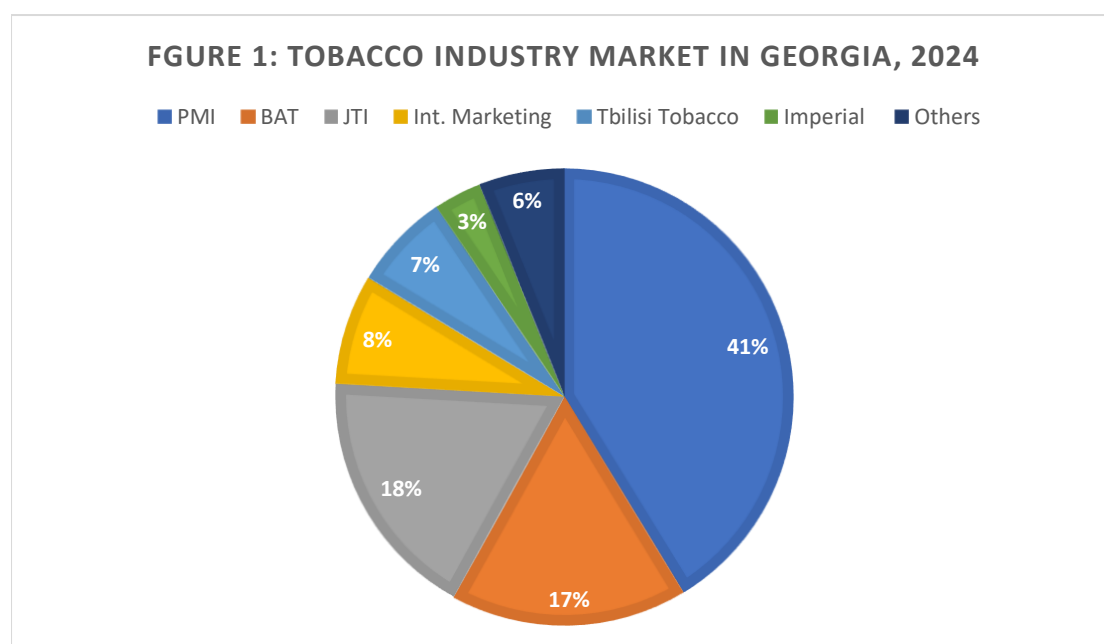
them not to support this proposal. Despite tobacco control efforts, the Parliament adopted the amendment on May 28, 2025.¹³

The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index scores are created biannually by the Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control.¹⁴ Georgia had one of the highest Index scores in 2020 (score: 77; rank: 54 of 57), in 2021 (score: 80; rank: 76 of 80) and in 2023 (score: 83; 86 of 90).¹⁵ The result means that the TI has serious influence on the State bodies in Georgia, and the situation in 2025 remains the same.

This report details the findings of tobacco industry interference monitoring conducted from August 2023 to June 2025. The monitoring reveals that the tobacco industry continues to exert considerable influence over the Georgian Government and Parliament. The following are specific instances of tobacco industry interference that have impacted the implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 and its guidelines.

Tobacco Industry's profile and marketing during 2023-2025

According to data from Euromonitor 2024, **41.3%** of the cigarette market share in Georgia belonged to Philip Morris International (PMI), 17.9% to Japan Tobacco International (JTI), 16.7% to British American Tobacco (BAT), 7.8% to International Marketing Company, 6.9% to Tbilisi Tobacco (local manufacturer), 3.4% to Imperial Tobacco and 6% to other tobacco companies.¹⁶ Nearly 80% of the tobacco market in Georgia is controlled by transnational tobacco companies (Figure 1).



Source: Euromonitor, 2024

¹³ Amendment on Law on "Tobacco Control", N 596-IIMS-XIMP, 28/05/2025. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6507691?publication=0>

¹⁴ Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control. The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index. Retrieved June 10, 2023: <https://globaltobaccoindex.org>

¹⁵ Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control. Global Tobacco Interference Scores – GEORGIA, 2020, 2021, 2023: <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/country/GE>

¹⁶ Euromonitor International, Ltd. 2024. Tobacco Market Research Data. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://www.portal.euromonitor.com/statisticsevolution/index>

PMI's negative influence on Georgian health policy increased after the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s decision authorizing the marketing of IQOS as a modified risk tobacco product on July 7, 2020.¹⁷ PMI announced its entry into the Georgian market with IQOS shortly after the FDA's decision. Since 2021, the company has intensified its aggressive and unlawful marketing of heated tobacco products like IQOS, as well as e-cigarettes and vapes—despite Georgia's ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS), including for novel products, in effect since September 1, 2018. In 2024, TI extended this marketing to include oral smokeless products such as “ZYN”.^{18,19} PMI has been one of the influential lobbyists over the last few years through the Business Association of Georgia (BAG), whose other members include JTI.^{20,21}

Since 2021, PMI has engaged new front groups—including the Institute of Social Researches (ISR) and the Ukrainian NGO “Healthy Initiatives”—to continue promoting IQOS. In collaboration with these organizations, PMI has continued to involve former Georgian Health Ministers Andrew Urushadze and Zurab Tchiaberashvili, as well as economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze, in both local and international activities during the 2023–2025 period.^{22,23,24,25} Former Deputy Health Minister Levan Jugeli has also remained active, facilitating communication with medical organizations and healthcare professionals to promote PMI's novel tobacco products and involve them in training sessions and research initiatives.²⁶

From early 2021 through June 2025, ISR has directly engaged family doctors, dentists (including through the Periodontologists Association, a co-organizer of several seminars), oncologists, pulmonologists, and cardiologists to conduct a series of seminars and trainings on so-called “tobacco harm reduction.” The central message of these events has been to encourage patients who smoke to switch from cigarettes to IQOS as a “harm

¹⁷ U.S. Food and Drug Administration, FDA Authorizes Marketing of IQOS Tobacco Heating System with “Reduced Exposure” Information. July 07, 2020: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-authorizes-marketing-iqos-tobacco-heating-system-reduced-exposure-information>

¹⁸ Forbes Georgia. PMI's IQOS officially enters to Georgian market. July 24, 2020: <https://forbes.ge/philip-moris-saqarthvelo-2/>

¹⁹ PMI. Smoke-free products. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://www.pmi.com/our-business/smoke-free-products/oral-smokeless-products>

²⁰ List of Members of the Business Association of Georgia (BAG). Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://bag.ge/en/33>

²¹ Business Association of Georgia. Tobacco Tactics, updated July 7, 2023. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://tobaccotactics.org/article/business-association-of-georgia/>

²² Healthy Initiatives Presents Research on Georgia's Illicit Cigarette Market at Prestigious European Conference. The Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 18.09.2023. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/healthy-initiatives-presents-research-on-georgia-s-illicit-cigarette-market-at-prestigious-european-conference/>

²³ Healthy Initiatives. Illicit cigarette market in Georgia: Potential impact on smoking prevalence and tax revenues. Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze on November 13, 2023. Published on 16.11.2023. Retrieved on June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/illicit-trade-can-science-tackle-it/>

²⁴ Healthy Initiatives. Smoking Remains a Significant Challenge for the Countries Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The event attended by former Ministers of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze and Mr. Zurab Tchiaberashvili, also economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 16.02.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/english-smoking-remains-a-significant-challenge-for-the-countries-across-eastern-europe-and-central-asia/>

²⁵ Healthy Initiatives. Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases and Smoking Amid War and Crisis: Global and Regional Actions. The event attended by former Minister of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze. Published on 18.06.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/tackling-non-communicable-diseases-and-smoking-amid-war-and-crisis-global-and-regional-actions/>

²⁶ Levan Jugeli. Profile in linked-in. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/levan-jugeli-8685b21/>

reduction” alternative.²⁷ More recently, ISR and PMI have also begun promoting smokeless tobacco products snus and oral nicotine pouches, alongside IQOS and e-cigarettes, in collaboration with select medical professionals.²⁸

Methodology

The report is based on a questionnaire developed by the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance. There are 20 questions based on the Article 5.3 guidelines. Information used in this report is obtained from the public domain only. A scoring system is applied to make the assessment. The score ranges from 0 to 5, where 5 indicates the highest level of industry interference, and 1 is low or no interference. Hence the lower the score, the better for the country. The 0 score indicates an absence of evidence or not applicable. Where multiple pieces of evidence are found, the score applied reflects an average.

The report covers information on incidents from **August 2023** through **June 2025**, but also includes incidents prior to **2023** that still have relevance today.

²⁷ FCTC Implementation and Monitoring Center in Georgia. Letter dated June 16, 2025.

²⁸ TV Formula. Talk on tobacco harm reduction by Mr. Andrew Urushadze and Oncologist Rema Gvamichava. May 4, 2025.

Summary Findings

I INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Over the 2023–2025 period, the tobacco industry (TI) in Georgia significantly increased its negative influence on public health policymaking, particularly through close engagement with Parliament, key Government ministries, and regulatory bodies. Several Government entities—including the **Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD)**, the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**, and the **Business Ombudsman’s Office (BOO)**—have repeatedly supported proposals from the tobacco industry. These include the **postponement of plain packaging regulations** and the **50% excise tax reduction** on various tobacco products, such as raw tobacco, hookah, snus, and chewing tobacco (approved in May 2024).

The **BOO** formally submitted proposals influenced by industry interests, such as the delay of plain packaging and the exemption of cigarillos from those requirements. Members of Parliament subsequently registered and adopted these proposals despite opposition from the tobacco control community.

The Government has allowed TI representatives to participate in **Governmental economic councils** and to maintain close ties with senior officials. **PMI and JTI**, through the **Business Association of Georgia (BAG)**, continue to have regular, undisclosed contact with top Government figures including the Prime Minister and various ministers. Notably, the **head of Georgia’s delegation to FCTC COP10** was a Director of the Department from the MoESD with known ties to the tobacco industry—marking the first time the Ministry of Health was sidelined in such an international setting. There is a strong assumption that the tobacco industry financed this delegate’s participation.

Moreover, the Government continues to delay adoption of the long-pending decree to implement **WHO FCTC Article 5.3** and the requirements of the national **Law on Tobacco Control**—originally due in 2018 and updated in 2022—reflecting persistent tobacco-industry interference in high-level decision-making and repeated postponements.

2 INDUSTRY CSR ACTIVITIES

Despite Georgia’s ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) since September 2018, the tobacco industry continues to engage in **unlawful corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities** aimed at improving its public image and influencing key stakeholders.

From **2023 to 2025**, both **PMI** and **JTI** actively sponsored and promoted activities disguised as CSR initiatives.

PMI, through the **Institute of Social Research (ISR)**, funded at least **10 seminars and conferences** targeting medical professionals—including family doctors, dentists, oncologists, and cardiologists—promoting heated tobacco products (HTPs), e-cigarettes, and oral tobacco products such as snus and ZYN under the guise of “tobacco harm reduction.” In **March 2025**, PMI launched a **paid**

internship program called *INKOMPASS*, aimed at university students and recent graduates, to build goodwill among younger audiences and future professionals.

JTI provided **unlawful support to charitable and cultural organizations**.

These CSR activities serve to **foster loyalty among Government officials** and create a more favorable environment for the industry, while **undermining the implementation of tobacco control laws**.

3 BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

Between 2023 and 2025, the Georgian Government granted multiple **regulatory and financial advantages** to the tobacco industry, undermining public health policies and contradicting WHO FCTC commitments.

Legislative Delays and Favorable Amendments

Implementation of the **plain packaging law** was delayed several times—initially scheduled for 2018, then postponed to 2023, to 2024, and ultimately to **April 1, 2025**—due to lobbying from **PMI**, the **American Chamber of Commerce**, and other industry allies.

On **May 1, 2025**, the **Business Ombudsman** submitted a proposal to exempt **cigarillos** from plain packaging and allow their use in cigar bars. Parliament adopted this amendment on **May 28, 2025**, despite opposition from the tobacco control community.

Tax Reductions

On **May 29, 2024**, the Parliament approved a **50% excise tax reduction** on **raw tobacco, chewing tobacco, snus, and hookah tobacco**, effective June 13, 2024. This decision is believed to have been influenced by lobbying from: **Local producers** (e.g., Tbilisi Tobacco) regarding raw and hookah tobacco, and **PMI**, regarding snus and chewing tobacco, in line with their market expansion goals.

Support for Industry Operations

The state agency “**Enterprise in Georgia**” provided **financial and technical assistance** to a **Lebanese hookah tobacco company**, including support for construction, raw materials, and equipment. The factory produces hookah aromas and vape liquids for export to China, with the final products re-entering the Georgian market, where they are widely used by youth.

These actions demonstrate a clear pattern of **regulatory accommodation and preferential treatment**, contributing to the continued influence and expansion of the tobacco industry in Georgia.

4 UNNECESSARY INTERACTION

From 2023 to 2025, the **Georgian Government continued to engage in unnecessary and non-transparent interactions** with the tobacco industry, violating WHO FCTC Article 5.3 recommendations.

High-Level Engagement

Tobacco industry representatives regularly met with high-ranking Government officials, including the **Prime Minister, Chairman of the Parliament, and Ministers of Finance, Economy, and Health**. These meetings were held **behind closed doors**, and no records or outcomes have been disclosed to the public, violating transparency obligations.

Former Officials and Political Connections

Former Minister of Economy Ivane Chkhartishvili, a close Government ally and owner of **Tbilisi Tobacco**, is believed to have played a major role in the **2024 tax reduction** on various tobacco products.

Former Georgian Health Ministers—Andrew Urushadze and Zurab Tchiaberashvili—actively participated in tobacco industry-backed activities promoting “tobacco harm reduction,” alongside economist **Giorgi Mzhavanadze** and **former Deputy Health Minister Lavan Jugeli**, further blurring the lines between public health and industry interests.

Industry Assistance to Government Functions

The **Ministry of Finance (MoF)** did not support implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 due to concerns it would limit the tobacco industry’s contributions to Government entities such as the **Revenue and Customs Services**.

In **2023**, the industry—particularly **Japan Tobacco International (JTI)**—provided: **Training** to customs staff; **Equipment**, including drones and sniffer dogs; **Sponsorships** for business students. These forms of “assistance” compromise the independence of public enforcement bodies and enable ongoing ties between regulators and the industry.

Partnerships and Endorsements

Government agencies **endorsed or supported industry-linked initiatives**, including **financial and logistical assistance** for the establishment of a **hookah tobacco factory** by a Lebanese company in 2022–2023. Such support directly contradicts Article 5.3 guidance, which advises against partnerships or endorsements that legitimize the tobacco industry.

In summary, unnecessary interactions between the Georgian Government and the tobacco industry remain **frequent, opaque, and unregulated**, undermining public health policy and reinforcing industry influence across sectors.

5 TRANSPARENCY

Despite legal obligations under the **WHO FCTC Article 5.3** and Georgia’s **Law on Tobacco Control**, the Georgian Government **lacks transparency** in its interactions with the tobacco industry. The following evidence highlights the absence of regulatory safeguards and the failure to disclose engagements:

No Public Disclosure of Meetings

Interactions between **Government officials and tobacco industry representatives**—including those from the **Parliament, Ministry of Economy**

(MoESD), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Health (MoH), Business Ombudsman's Office (BOO), and the Administration of the Prime Minister—are **not publicly disclosed**. Although the BOO acknowledged holding **four meetings** with industry representatives from 2023 to 2025, **no information** was provided about the **agendas, participants, or outcomes** of those meetings.

Delayed Implementation of the WHO FCTC Article 5.3 via Governmental Decree

The **2017 amendment** to Georgia's tobacco control law required the Government to adopt a **decree regulating communication between public officials and the tobacco industry** by **September 1, 2018**. Although the **NCDC** and the **Tobacco Control Alliance** developed and submitted the draft in 2018 (and revised it in 2022), it remains **unapproved** as of **June 2025**. A **Parliamentary resolution** in **April 2021** urged the Government to adopt the decree and enhance transparency, but **no action** has followed.

No Registration or Disclosure Requirements

There is **no legal requirement** for tobacco companies, affiliated organizations, or lobbyists acting on their behalf to **register or disclose** their activities or financial relationships with Government officials. These gaps demonstrate that Georgia's Government has **no functional system in place** to ensure **transparency** in its dealings with the tobacco industry—allowing for ongoing interference and weakening compliance with international tobacco control obligations.

6 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The 2023–2025 monitoring period revealed **serious and unresolved conflicts of interest** between public officials and the tobacco industry in Georgia. These relationships pose a significant threat to impartial policy-making and undermine WHO FCTC Article 5.3 guidelines.

No Ban on Political Contributions

The Georgian Government **does not prohibit political contributions** from the tobacco industry or affiliated entities to **political parties, candidates, or election campaigns**. There is also **no requirement for full disclosure** of such contributions, allowing hidden influence over public officials.

Close Ties Between Industry and Former Government Officials

A notable case involves **Ivane Chkhartishvili**, former Minister of Economy and a key ally of the ruling political elite. He and his son **Michael Chkhartishvili** (owner of Tbilisi Tobacco) are believed to have influenced the **2024 tax cuts** on tobacco products. **Transparency International Georgia** previously exposed corruption-related negotiations involving these individuals and local manufacturers.

Former Health Ministers **Andrew Urushadze** and **Zurab Tchiaberashvili** actively collaborated with **PMI-funded entities** (ISR and Ukraine's "Healthy Initiatives") during 2023–2025 to promote the tobacco industry's "harm reduction" agenda at both national and international levels.

Employment History of Current Officials

Current Deputy Minister of Economy **Irakli Nadareishvili** served as **Commercial Director for Imperial Brands** (Georgia and Moldova) from 2013 to 2016. **Gennady Arveladze**, another Deputy Minister of Economy, is known for **advocating tobacco industry interests** within the Government and Parliament.

Lack of Disclosure Mechanisms

There is **no existing procedure or mechanism** to monitor or prevent **conflicts of interest** related to Government officials or their **relatives** holding positions—such as consultants or board members—within the tobacco industry. While no public records confirm such ties, this may reflect the **absence of disclosure obligations**, not the absence of conflicts.

In sum, Georgia lacks critical safeguards to prevent or mitigate **conflicts of interest** between Government officials and the tobacco industry, allowing undue influence to persist at the highest levels of policymaking.

7 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Georgia has **not yet implemented key preventive mechanisms** recommended under Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC to safeguard public health policies from tobacco industry interference. The period from 2023 to 2025 revealed significant regulatory gaps and institutional inaction:

No Procedure for Disclosing Interactions

There is **no established procedure** for disclosing records of interactions between public officials and the tobacco industry, such as **agendas, attendees, meeting minutes, or outcomes**. Government interactions with the industry continue to occur **behind closed doors**, with **no public access** to relevant documentation.

Code of Conduct Not Implemented

Although Georgia's **2017 tobacco control law** required the adoption of a Governmental decree to regulate communication with the tobacco industry, it **has not been adopted** as of **June 2025**. A draft decree—prepared by the **NCDC** and **Tobacco Control Alliance**—has been under review for years and remains blocked by opposition from the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)** and the **Prime Minister's Administration**.

Inadequate Industry Reporting Requirements

The tobacco industry is required to report **only limited information**, mainly for **taxation and statistical purposes** (e.g., to GeoStat). There are **no legal requirements** to disclose **marketing expenditures, lobbying activities, revenues, political contributions, or CSR/philanthropic activities**—a major loophole in oversight and enforcement.

No Awareness Program for Officials

The Government **does not operate a training or awareness program** for public servants on Article 5.3 principles or on how to manage industry interference. As a result, officials across agencies lack **guidance or standards** to avoid industry influence in policy-making.

No Ban on Gifts or Contributions

Georgia has **not adopted a formal policy prohibiting** the acceptance of **gifts, contributions, policy assistance, or study visit invitations** from the tobacco industry. This leaves public officials vulnerable to industry influence and creates opportunities for **undue access and influence**.

In summary, Georgia lacks the **core safeguards** needed to prevent tobacco industry interference. Until measures such as **mandatory transparency, a code of conduct, full disclosure requirements, and awareness-raising programs** are adopted and enforced, the tobacco industry will continue to undermine public health policy and international treaty obligations.

Recommendations

To effectively implement WHO FCTC Article 5.3 and protect public health policy from tobacco industry interference, the Government of Georgia must urgently adopt a range of policy and legislative reforms.

Recommendation 1:

Adopt the long-overdue Governmental Decree on “Protecting State Policy Related to Tobacco Control in Public Institutions and Establishing Rules for Communication Between Public Officials and the Tobacco Industry”, initially submitted in 2018 and updated in 2022. This decree should regulate interactions between public officials and the tobacco industry and require full disclosure of all communications, meetings, and partnerships, including agendas and outcomes.

Recommendation 2:

Establish a comprehensive Code of Conduct for public servants at all levels of Government. This should prohibit the acceptance of gifts, financial or in-kind support, and other contributions from the tobacco industry. It must also apply to offers of study visits, policy drafting support, and CSR-linked sponsorships.

Recommendation 3:

Introduce mandatory transparency and reporting mechanisms. The tobacco industry should be legally required to report data on marketing expenditures, lobbying activities, political contributions, revenues, and CSR programs. This information should be publicly accessible. Ongoing monitoring of tobacco industry interference is essential and must be supported through the strengthening of tobacco control legislation and related programs.

Recommendation 4:

Develop and implement ongoing capacity-building and awareness programs for Government officials, members of Parliament, and regulatory bodies about their obligations under Article 5.3 and the risks of industry interference.

Recommendation 5:

Enact a ban on political contributions from the tobacco industry and its affiliates to political parties, election campaigns, and individual candidates. In parallel, create legal mechanisms to identify and prevent conflicts of interest between current or former public officials and the tobacco industry.

Georgia
Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2025
Results and Findings

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INDICATOR 1: Level of Industry Participation in Policy-Development						
I. The Government ²⁹ accepts, supports or endorses any offer for assistance by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry or any entity or person working to further its interests. ³⁰ in setting or implementing public health policies in relation to tobacco control ³¹ (Rec 3.4)						5
In the last two years, TI strengthened their ties with Georgian decision-makers. The main examples of such collaboration against public health interest are here: On May 29, 2024, the Parliament of Georgia approved a 50% tax reduction on raw tobacco, chewing tobacco, snus, and hookah tobacco.³² It is believed that this proposal was influenced by lobbying efforts from local producers, such as Tbilisi Tobacco,³³ particularly with regard to raw and hookah tobacco. The inclusion of snus and chewing tobacco appears to reflect the interests of Philip Morris International (PMI), which has been actively seeking to introduce its snus products to the Georgian market.^{34,35} The tobacco industry and its allies have successfully delayed the implementation of plain packaging regulations. Originally scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2018, the deadline was first postponed to January 1, 2023, then to July 31, 2024, and lastly to April 1, 2025.³⁶ The most recent postponement was officially proposed by the Business Ombudsman's Office of Georgia, based on suggestions received from representatives of the tobacco industry.³⁷ Following this, member of Parliament Irakli Kirtskhalia initiated a formal proposal to delay implementation in June 2024.³⁸ PMI has been one of the influential lobbyists over the last few years through the Business Association of Georgia (BAG), whose other members include JTI.^{39,40}						

²⁹ The term "government" refers to any public official whether or not acting within the scope of authority as long as cloaked with such authority or holding out to another as having such authority

³⁰ The term, "tobacco industry" includes those representing its interests or working to further its interests, including the State-owned tobacco industry.

³¹ "Offer of assistance" may include draft legislation, technical input, recommendations, oversees study tour

³² Amendments on "Tax Code", N 4203-XIVMS-XMP, 29/05/2024. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6177582?publication=0>

³³ Tbilisi Tobacco. Row materials and blending. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://tbilisitobacco.ge>

³⁴ PMI. Smoke-free products. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://www.pmi.com/our-business/smoke-free-products/oral-smokeless-products>

³⁵ TV Formula. Talk on tobacco harm reduction by Mr. Andrew Urushadze and Oncologist Rema Gvamichava. May 4, 2025.

³⁶ Law on "Tobacco Control", 4059-RS. 15/12/2010. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1160150?publication=17>

³⁷ Business Ombudsman of Georgia. Official Letter to the Chair of the Parliament of Georgia N 00000173, 06/06/2024.

³⁸ Parliament of Georgia. Legislative documents for the draft amendment N 07-3/456/10, 19.06.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://parliament.ge/legislation/28842>

³⁹ List of Members of the Business Association of Georgia (BAG). Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://bag.ge/en/33>

⁴⁰ Business Association of Georgia. Tobacco Tactics, updated July 7, 2023. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://tobaccotactics.org/article/business-association-of-georgia/>

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PMI has engaged new front groups—including the Institute of Social Researches (ISR) and the Ukrainian NGO “Healthy Initiatives”—to continue promoting IQOS during reporting period 2023–2025. In collaboration with these organizations, PMI has continued to involve former Georgian Health Ministers Andrew Urushadze and Zurab Tchiaberashvili, as well as economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze, in both local and international activities during the same period. ^{41,42,43,44} Former Deputy Health Minister Levan Jugeli has also remained active, facilitating communication with medical organizations and healthcare professionals to promote PMI’s novel tobacco products and involve them in training sessions and research initiatives. ⁴⁵						
One of PMI’s front groups, Business Media Georgia (BMG), has been unlawfully promoting HTPs as harm reduction tools. In October 2024, their journalist, Elene Kvanchilashvili, visited PMI’s headquarters in Switzerland to attend a company-organized conference on innovations. The primary objective of the event was the promotion of HTPs. ⁴⁶						
2. The Government accepts, supports or endorses policies or legislation drafted by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry. (Rec 3.4)						5
Over the past two years (2023–2025), the Georgian Parliament and various Government agencies—including the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), and the Business Ombudsman’s Office (BOO)—have consistently supported proposals put forward by the tobacco industry. These entities maintain ongoing communication and hold meetings with industry representatives, often lacking transparency. As outlined in the previous section of this report, in 2024 the Parliament postponed the implementation of plain packaging regulations ⁴⁷ and approved a 50% reduction in excise taxes on raw tobacco and certain tobacco products. ⁴⁸						
In its official correspondence, the BOO of Georgia stated that it held only four meetings with tobacco industry representatives during the 2023–2025 period. ⁴⁹ However, the						

⁴¹ Healthy Initiatives Presents Research on Georgia’s Illicit Cigarette Market at Prestigious European Conference. The Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 18.09.2023. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/healthy-initiatives-presents-research-on-georgia-s-illicit-cigarette-market-at-prestigious-european-conference/>

⁴² Healthy Initiatives. Illicit cigarette market in Georgia: Potential impact on smoking prevalence and tax revenues. Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze on November 13, 2023. Published on 16.11.2023. Retrieved on June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/illicit-trade-can-science-tackle-it/>

⁴³ Healthy Initiatives. Smoking Remains a Significant Challenge for the Countries Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The event attended by former Ministers of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze and Mr. Zurab Tchiaberashvili, also economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 16.02.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/english-smoking-remains-a-significant-challenge-for-the-countries-across-eastern-europe-and-central-asia/>

⁴⁴ Healthy Initiatives. Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases and Smoking Amid War and Crisis: Global and Regional Actions. The event attended by former Minister of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze. Published on 18.06.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/tackling-non-communicable-diseases-and-smoking-amid-war-and-crisis-global-and-regional-actions/>

⁴⁵ Levan Jugeli. Profile in linked-in. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/levan-jugeli-8685b21/>

⁴⁶ <https://bm.ge/news/kvleva-da-ganvitareba-rd>

⁴⁷ Parliament of Georgia. Legislative documents for the draft amendment N 07-3/456/10, 19.06.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://parliament.ge/legislation/28842>

⁴⁸ Amendments on “Tax Code”, N 4203-XIVMS-XMP, 29/05/2024. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6177582?publication=0>

⁴⁹ Business Ombudsman of Georgia. Response to the FCTC Implementation and Monitoring Center in Georgia, N 00000101, 07/04/2025.

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BOO did not disclose the topics discussed at these meetings or whether any agreements or commitments were made. Notably, on June 6, 2024, the BOO formally appealed to the Parliament, requesting a postponement of the plain tobacco packaging regulation. ⁵⁰						
3. The Government allows/invites the tobacco industry to sit in Government interagency/ multi-sectoral committee/ advisory group body that sets public health policy. (Rec 4.8)						5
The tobacco industry continues to engage in closed-door meetings with Government officials, primarily those working in the economic sector. Key supporters and lobbyists for the industry's interests within the Government include the MoESD and BOO. Since 2014, the MoESD has implemented a state program titled “Enterprise in Georgia,” which has provided support for local tobacco production.⁵¹ The Deputy Minister of MoESD remains an active advocate for tobacco industry interests, both at the Governmental level and within parliamentary processes.^{52,53} In 2018, the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), in collaboration with the Tobacco Control Alliance in Georgia, developed a draft Governmental decree aimed at implementing Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The draft was submitted to the Administration of the Prime Minister for approval in June 2018. However, as of 2025—seven years later—it remains under review with no formal adoption. The Tobacco Control Alliance believes this prolonged delay is a result of the tobacco industry’s significant influence over the Georgian Government and policymaking processes.⁵⁴ On April 13, 2021, the Parliament adopted a special resolution and addressed the Government on the timely adoption of the Decree and the need for Governmental transparency in relation to the TI.^{55,56} The NCDC resumed work on the implementation of Article 5.3 during 2022–2023, organizing several consultations with key stakeholders. A revised draft decree was finalized and uploaded to the official Governmental portal at the end of 2023; however, it still awaits approval from the Government's economic team. Additionally, the Scientific-Consultative Council on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention under the Parliamentary Committee on Healthcare held a dedicated hearing to assess the implementation of FCTC provisions and the alignment of national tobacco control regulations with international standards.⁵⁷ The consultative body addressed to the Government related to adopt the normative act related to implementation of the FCTC 5.3.						

⁵⁰ Business Ombudsman of Georgia. Official Letter to the Chair of the Parliament of Georgia, N 00000173, 06/06/2024.

⁵¹ Governmental Decree N365, 30.05.2014 on “adoption of State program regarding “Enterprise in Georgia”.
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2362780?publication=0>

⁵² Natia Amiranashvili. George Bakhturidze: Tobacco control remains on the level of declarations. Liberali. September 29, 2014: <http://liberali.ge/news/view/12396/giorgi-bakhturidze-tambaqos-kontroli-gantskhadebebis-doneze-rcheba>

⁵³ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. Gennady Arveladze, Deputy Minister. Retrieved June 22, 2025: https://www.economy.ge/?page=deputy-ministers&deputy=5&fname=გენადი_არველაძე&lang=en

⁵⁴ Georgian Public Broadcasting Company. Statement of the Tobacco Control Alliance in Georgia. April 3, 2019:
<https://ltv.ge/news/tambaqos-kontrolis-aliansi-ganckhadebas-avrcelebs/>

⁵⁵ Healthcare and Social Issues Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. Post legislative scrutiny (PLS) on the Law of Georgia “on Tobacco Control” – Final Report. 2019:

https://parliament.leavingstone.club/storage/files/shares/naak/jandacva/tambaqo/report_eng.pdf

⁵⁶ Parliament of Georgia. Resolution of the Parliament N 455-IVms-Xmp, adopted April 13, 2021:
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5148191?publication=0>

⁵⁷ Parliament of Georgia. Meeting of scientific-consultative body under the healthcare committee of the Parliament of Georgia on Oct 2, 2023. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://www.parliament.ge/media/news/janmrtebis-khelshetsqobisa-da-daavadebata-preventsiiis-sametsniero-sakonsultatsio-sabchom-morigi-skhdoma-gamarta>

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Representatives of the tobacco industry and the BAG participate as invited members in Governmental economic councils. ⁵⁸ The Prime Minister has held periodic meetings with members of the BAG, including representatives of the tobacco industry. ^{59,60,61} PMI did not participate in the business sector's protest following the Prime Minister's announcement that Georgia would suspend EU membership negotiations until 2029. ⁶² This also clearly demonstrates the close ties between the tobacco industry and the Georgian Government.						
4. The Government nominates or allows representatives from the tobacco industry (including State-owned) in the delegation to the COP or other subsidiary bodies or accepts their sponsorship for delegates. (i.e. COP 4 & 5, INB 4 5, WG) ⁶³ (Rec 4.9 & 8.3) For non-COP year, follow the previous score of COP year.					4	
For the first time, the head of Georgia's delegation to the FCTC COP10 was a representative from the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MESD), rather than from the Ministry of Health. ⁶⁴ The appointed head, Givi Zedelashvili, serves as the Head of the Department of Trade Development and International Economic Relations ⁶⁵ —an office under the direct supervision of Deputy Minister Gennady Arveladze, ⁶⁶ who is known to have ties with the tobacco industry. Arveladze was actively involved in debates surrounding the adoption of Georgia's tobacco control legislation in 2016–2017, during which he consistently defended the interests and so-called "rights" of the tobacco industry.						
There is a strong assumption that Zedelashvili's participation in COP10 may have been financially supported—directly or indirectly—by the tobacco industry. Another member of the delegation represented the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) under the Ministry of Health (MoH). ⁶⁷ However, the role of the delegation head appeared to focus on undermining the Ministry of Health's position during the conference. According to reports, Zedelashvili acted under the instructions of Deputy Minister Arveladze and, in one instance, after consulting with him, prompted Arveladze to contact the First Deputy Health Minister. As a result, the MoH delegate was prevented from voicing support for key public health positions related to tobacco control during COP10.						
INDICATOR 2: Industry CSR activities						

⁵⁸ Economic Council of the Government. Decree N 592, Dec 26, 2022:

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5666418?publication=0>

⁵⁹ TV Imedi. Meeting of Primer Minister with Businessmen. September 17, 2024. Retrieved June 22, 2025:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2zujlVf5U>

⁶⁰ Georgian Public Broadcasting Company. Meeting of Prime Minister with Businessmen. September 17, 2024:

<https://1tv.ge/video/premier-ministris-shekhvedra-biznesis-warmomadgenlebtan-2/>

⁶¹ Georgian office of Radio Freedom. "We need peace" – Kobakhidze's meeting with businessmen continued more than 4 hours. December 23, 2024: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/პრემიერი-მსხვილ-ბიზნესს-შეხვედა/33250298.html>

⁶² Free business statement on the portal: <https://freebusiness.ge/home>

⁶³ Please annex a list since 2009 so that the respondent can quantify the frequency, <http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/en/>

⁶⁴ WHO FCTC. COP 11, list of participants. Retrieved June 22, 2025:

<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/377693/fctc-cop10-div-1-list-of-participants-en.pdf?sequence=1>

⁶⁵ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. Department of Trade Development and International Economic Relation. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://www.economy.ge/?page=departments&dep=103&lang=en>

⁶⁶ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. Gennady Arveladze, Deputy Minister. Retrieved June 22, 2025: https://www.economy.ge/?page=deputy-ministers&deputy=5&fname=გენადი_არველაძე&lang=en

⁶⁷ WHO FCTC. COP 11, list of participants. Retrieved June 22, 2025:

<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/377693/fctc-cop10-div-1-list-of-participants-en.pdf?sequence=1>

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5. A. Government agencies or their officials endorse, support, form partnerships with or participates in activities of the tobacco industry described as socially responsible. For example, environmental programs. (Rec 6.2) B. The Government (its agencies and officials) receives CSR contributions⁶⁸ (monetary or otherwise, including CSR contributions) from the tobacco industry or those working to further its interests (eg political, social, financial, educational, community or other contributions (Rec 6.4) including environmental or EPR activities (COP10 Dec)). <i>NOTE: exclude enforcement activities as this is covered in another question</i>				3		
The TI continues to engage in unlawful promotion and sponsorship of events to market its new products, including heated tobacco products (HTPs), e-cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. As previously noted, all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship—including for HTPs and e-cigarettes—have been prohibited in Georgia since September 2018.⁶⁹ The FCTC Implementation and Monitoring Center in Georgia defined several unlawful HTPs, vapes and snus promotion actions organized by the Institute of Social Research (ISR) through funding from PMI. At least 10 seminars/meetings/conferences for medical doctors and other stakeholders were organized during 2023-25 with PMI support.⁷⁰ At the end of March 2025, PMI announced a paid internship program called INKOMPASS, targeting young professionals—specifically university students in their final year of a Bachelor's or Master's program, as well as recent graduates from 2023 and 2024. The internship began in June 2025 and is scheduled to conclude in January 2026.⁷¹ JTI has provided unlawful support to cultural and charitable organizations in Georgia, including during the period of 2023-2025. These organizations include: Caritas Georgia, Humanitarian Canteen in Tbilisi, Day Care Center for the Elderly "Harmony", Home Care Program, McClain Association for Children (MAC) through the AmCham Georgia Scholarship Program, LEPL "Marika," Tbilisi International Theatre Festival (supported since 2011), and Theatre 42.⁷² Through these unlawful sponsorship and promotional activities, JTI fosters loyalty among Government officials in Georgia and contributes to the undermining of tobacco control regulations.						
INDICATOR 3: Benefits to the Tobacco Industry						
6. The Government accommodates requests from the tobacco industry for a longer time frame for implementation or postponement of tobacco control law. (e.g. 180 days is common						5

⁶⁸ political, social financial, educations, community, technical expertise or training to counter smuggling or any other forms of contributions

⁶⁹ Law on "Tobacco Control", 4059-RS. 15/12/2010. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1160150?publication=17>

⁷⁰ FCTC Implementation and Monitoring Center. Letter dated June 16, 2025.

⁷¹ PMI internship program INKOMPASS, 2025: <https://www.inkompass.global/georgia-internship-program>

⁷² JTI. Investing in local communities. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://www.jti.com/en/our-company/where-we-operate/georgia/investing-in-local-communities>

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for PHW, Tax increase can be implemented within 1 month) (Rec 7.1)						
In accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and Article 6.4 of Georgia’s Law on Tobacco Control,⁷³ the Government was required to adopt the decree titled “On Protecting State Policy Related to Tobacco Control in Public Institutions and Establishing Rules for Communication Between Public Officials and the Tobacco Industry” by September 2018. However, as of June 2025, the decree remains under consideration and has not yet been adopted. Another case is that the law on tobacco control mandating plain packaging was initially postponed from January 2018 to January 2023 due to interference from PMI and the American Chamber of Commerce.⁷⁴ It was postponed again until July 31, 2024 through the tobacco industry’s proposal, which was adopted by the Parliament on November 29, 2022 without any serious arguments or opposition.⁷⁵ The last postponement was made in June 2024 when plain packaging regulation was pushed back to April 1, 2025.⁷⁶ Starting April 1, 2025, the industry employed manipulative tactics by printing and distributing hundreds of thousands of cards displaying images of plain packaging. These cards were widely placed in front of old-style cigarette packs at retail outlets across Georgia, creating a false impression that all cigarette products were compliant with the plain packaging regulations. Furthermore, monitoring conducted by the FCTC Implementation and Monitoring Centre in Georgia revealed a letter dated April 24, 2025, issued by the head office of the “Magniti” supermarket chain. The letter instructed retail locations to accept only older, traditionally branded cigarette packs from the distributor company “JJ 2011,” and assured that the distributor would cover any fines imposed on the supermarkets for non-compliance with tobacco packaging regulations.⁷⁷ On May 1, 2025, the BOO submitted a formal legislative amendment proposal to Parliament.⁷⁸ Within two weeks, members of Parliament—Shota Berekashvili, Ms. Mariam Lashkhi, Irakli Kirtskhalia, Levan Machavariani, Vakhtang Turnava, and Giorgi Barvenashvili—formally introduced a proposal to amend the Law on Tobacco Control. The proposal, introduced as a legislative initiative, aimed to exempt cigarillos from plain packaging regulations and to permit their use in licensed cigar bars. In response, the Tobacco Control Alliance of Georgia sent official letters to the Chair of Parliament and the Minister of Health, urging them to reject the proposal. Despite strong opposition						

⁷³ Law on "Tobacco Control", 4059-RS. 15/12/2010. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025:

<https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1160150?publication=17>

⁷⁴ Parliament of Georgia. Law of Georgia on “Tobacco Control”. Amendment N 1278 RS. Retrieved June 22, 2025:

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3754138?publication=0>

⁷⁵ Parliament of Georgia. Law of Georgia on “Tobacco Control”. Amendment N 2127-IXM-XMP. Retrieved June 22, 2025:

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5626557?publication=0>

⁷⁶ Parliament of Georgia. Law of Georgia on “Tobacco Control”. Amendment N 4361-XIVMS-XMP. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6206030?publication=0>

⁷⁷ Letter dated April 24, 2025, from the “Magniti” supermarket network's head office.

⁷⁸ Parliament of Georgia. Law of Georgia on “Tobacco Control”. Amendment proposal N 1-3822/25/11. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://parliament.ge/legislation/30697>

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from the tobacco control community, the Parliament adopted the amendment on May 28, 2025. ⁷⁹						
Georgia has not yet acceded to the WHO FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. The TI continues to oppose the introduction of effective control measures aimed at combating illicit trade, including the licensing of tobacco sale, distribution, import, and export, as well as the full implementation of a tobacco tracking and tracing system. Although several meetings on the issue have been held with the participation of members of Parliament, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Health (MoH), and other key stakeholders, the influence of the tobacco industry remains substantial. While the Ministry of Finance has shown some interest in the issue, it—along with the MoESD—has yet to grant the necessary approval for Georgia to move forward with accession to the Protocol. ^{80,81}						
In 2023, the state agency "Enterprise in Georgia" offered various forms of support to facilitate the establishment of a hookah tobacco factory from Lebanon. This assistance included financial support for construction, procurement of raw materials, and the acquisition of equipment necessary for the evaluation and production of hookah tobacco. ⁸² Hookah factory "H Hookah" produces liquids for vapes sent to China for production of vaping products which are then imported for sale on Georgian market. ⁸³ The main consumers of vaping products are Georgian children and youth. Due to unlawful promotion of vaping products and sales of such products to minors, the prevalence among 15-16 years population more than doubled from 7% in 2019 to 15% in 2024. ⁸⁴						
7. The Government gives privileges, incentives, tax exemptions, subsidies, financial incentives, or benefits to the tobacco industry (Rec 7.3)						5
The MoESD, along with the BOO, are the primary Governmental entities supporting and lobbying on behalf of the tobacco industry. Through its state program "Enterprise in Georgia," the MoESD has provided support for local tobacco production since 2014. ⁸⁵ The web site of the agency "Enterprise in Georgia" has listed priorities such as						

⁷⁹ Amendment on Law on "Tobacco Control", N 596-IIIMS-XIMP, 28/05/2025. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6507691?publication=0>

⁸⁰ Prime Time. Tobacco Black Market – the places where you can find most violations. August 11, 2021. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://old.primetime.ge/tambaqos-shavi-bazari-adgilebi-saqartveloshi-sadats-kvelaze-meti-kanondarghvevaa>

⁸¹ GEOECOHUB. Meeting held in Tbilisi to promote accession to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. March 24, 2022: <http://geoecohub.ge/2022/03/24/თბილისში-გაიმართა-შეხვედი/>

⁸² Business Media. With the support of the state agency "Enterprise in Georgia", a hookah new enterprise was opened in Kobuleti. July 14, 2023: <https://bm.ge/news/saagentos-awarmoe-saqartveloshi-mxardacherit-qobuletschi-chilimis-aromatebis-sawarmo-gaixsna/138661>

⁸³ Comersant.ge. Hookah aroma factory in Kobuleti enlarges export markets in USA and Brazil. 04.03.2024: <https://comersant.ge/news/busuness/qobuletschi-tsarmoebuli-chilimis-aromatebis-satsarmo-saeqsporto-bazrebs-afartoebis-da-ashsh-sa-da-brazilashits-gadis>

⁸⁴ EUDA. 2025. Key findings from the 2024 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). DOI: 10.2810/5746644

⁸⁵ Government of Georgia. Decree N365, 30.05.2014 on "adoption of State program regarding "Enterprise in Georgia". Retrieved June 15, 2023: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2362780?publication=0>

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production/farming and retail sale of tobacco production. ^{86,87} The most recent example of this state agency's support for the Lebanese tobacco company is provided in previous paragraph (question 6).						
Tobacco products sold in duty-free zones in Georgia are not required to carry pictorial health warnings and plain packaging rules. Hence, duty-free zone retailers can display tobacco products without restrictions. ⁸⁸ International travellers entering Georgia can bring in duty-free 200 sticks of cigarettes or 50 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250 grams of tobacco. ⁸⁹						
Smoking is permitted in casinos and also in slot clubs that operate 20 or more slot machines and pay GEL 200,000 per year or more as license fees for slot clubs. ⁹⁰ As of May 29, 2025, smoking cigarillos is also permitted in licensed cigar bars. ⁹¹						
The Government has not proposed tobacco tax increases since November 2019, and has not even adjusted taxes to account for inflation during these years. ⁹² Instead of tax increase, on May 29, 2024, the Parliament of Georgia approved a 50% tax reduction on raw tobacco, chewing tobacco, snus, and hookah tobacco. We assume that the proposal was lobbied by local manufacturers such as Tbilisi Tobacco, particularly concerning raw tobacco and hookah tobacco. In contrast, the inclusion of snus and chewing tobacco reflected the interests of Philip Morris International (PMI), which has been seeking to introduce its snus products to the Georgian market. The new rate came into effect on June 13, 2024. As a result, the tax decreased from approximately USD 24 per kilogram on above mentioned products to USD 12 per kilogram. ⁹³						
INDICATOR 4: Forms of Unnecessary Interaction						
8. Top level Government officials (such as President/ Prime Minister or Minister ⁹⁴) meet with/ foster relations with the tobacco companies such as attending social functions and other events sponsored or organized by the tobacco companies or those furthering its interests. (Rec 2.1)						5

⁸⁶ GeoStat. National Classificatory of Georgia, Types of economic activity, sec 006-2016, redaction 2. 2016. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://www.enterprisegeorgia.gov.ge/files/1/ევრომნიშვნელობის%20საქმიანობის%20სახეები.pdf>

⁸⁷ Agency "Enterprise in Georgia", NACE activity code. Retrieved June 22, 2025:

<https://www.enterprisegeorgia.gov.ge/files/1/NACE%20საქმიანობის%20კოდი2.pdf>

⁸⁸ Law on "Tobacco Control", 4059-RS. 15/12/2010. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1160150?publication=17>

⁸⁹ Parliament of Georgia. Tax Code of Georgia, updated 26.06.2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1043717?publication=232>

⁹⁰ The Parliament of Georgia. Amendments to "Tobacco Control" Law, 859-Il. May 17, 2017. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3676731?publication=2>

⁹¹ The Parliament of Georgia. Amendments to "Tobacco Control" Law, 596-IlMS-XIMP, May 28, 2025. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6507691?publication=0>

⁹² Business Media Georgia. Taxes will be increased of some kind of tobacco products since November 21. Nov 5, 2019: <https://bm.ge/ka/article/21-noembridan-tambaqos-saxeobebze-aqcizi-izrdeba---agwevs-tu-ara-mizans-aqcizis-zrda/43009>

⁹³ Amendments on "Tax Code", N 4203-XIVMS-XMP, 29/05/2024. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 20, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6177582?publication=0>

⁹⁴ Includes immediate members of the families of the high-level officials

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Both open sources and insider information confirm that tobacco industry representatives hold periodic meetings with the Prime Minister, ^{95,96,97} the Chairman of the Parliament and the Ministers of Finance, Economy, and Health. However, no information is publicly available regarding the outcomes of these meetings, despite the transparency requirements outlined in Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and the Georgian law on tobacco control.						
Former Minister of Economy Ivane Chkhartishvili is one of the favorite businessmen of the Government and owns a local tobacco manufacturer company. ⁹⁸ It is assumed that he played a key role in influencing the decision to reduce taxes on raw and other types of tobacco products in 2024.						
In collaboration with the PMI-funded Georgian Institute of Social Research (ISR) and the Ukrainian organization “Healthy Initiatives,” former Georgian Health Ministers Andrew Urushadze and Zurab Tchiaberashvili, along with economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze, participated in both local and international activities related to so-called “tobacco harm reduction” during the 2023–2025 period too. ^{99,100,101,102} Former Deputy Health Minister Levan Jugeli has also remained active, facilitating communication with medical organizations and healthcare professionals to promote PMI’s novel tobacco products and involve them in training sessions and research initiatives. ¹⁰³						
9. The Government accepts assistance/offers of assistance from the tobacco industry on enforcement such as conducting raids on tobacco smuggling or enforcing smoke free policies or no sales to minors (including monetary contribution for these activities). (Rec 4.3)				3		
One of the reasons the MoF did not support the implementation of FCTC Article 5.3 is the concern that it would limit the ability of the tobacco industry to provide support or						

⁹⁵ TV Imedi. Meeting of Primer Minister with Businessmen. September 17, 2024. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2zujlVFg5U>

⁹⁶ Georgian Public Broadcasting Company. Meeting of Prime Minister with Businessmen. September 17, 2024: <https://1tv.ge/video/premier-ministis-shekhvedra-biznesis-warmomadgenlebtan-2/>

⁹⁷ Georgian office of Radio Freedom. “We need peace” – Kobakhidze’s meeting with businessmen continued more than 4 hours. December 23, 2024: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/პრემიერი-მსხვილ-ბიზნესს-შეხვდა/33250298.html>

⁹⁸ Shota Tkeshelashvili. How many millions of incomes does Ivane Chkhartishvili’s tobacco business have? BMG, Sep 20, 2022: <https://bm.ge/ka/article/ramdeni-milionis-shemosavali-aqvs-ivane-chxartishvilis-tabaqos-bizness/116857>

⁹⁹ Healthy Initiatives Presents Research on Georgia’s Illicit Cigarette Market at Prestigious European Conference. The Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 18.09.2023. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/healthy-initiatives-presents-research-on-georgia-s-illicit-cigarette-market-at-prestigious-european-conference/>

¹⁰⁰ Healthy Initiatives. Illicit cigarette market in Georgia: Potential impact on smoking prevalence and tax revenues. Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze on November 13, 2023. Published on 16.11.2023. Retrieved on June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/illicit-trade-can-science-tackle-it/>

¹⁰¹ Healthy Initiatives. Smoking Remains a Significant Challenge for the Countries Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The event attended by former Ministers of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze and Mr. Zurab Tchiaberashvili, also economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 16.02.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/english-smoking-remains-a-significant-challenge-for-the-countries-across-eastern-europe-and-central-asia/>

¹⁰² Healthy Initiatives. Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases and Smoking Amid War and Crisis: Global and Regional Actions. The event attended by former Minister of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze. Published on 18.06.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/tackling-non-communicable-diseases-and-smoking-amid-war-and-crisis-global-and-regional-actions/>

¹⁰³ Levan Jugeli. Profile in linked-in. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/levan-jugeli-8685b21/>

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make contributions to its affiliated structures, such as the Revenue Service and Customs Service.						
In 2023, the tobacco industry provided support to the Revenue Service and Customs Service of the Ministry of Finance by organizing trainings for staff, as well as supplying resources such as detection dogs and drones to assist in identifying smuggling activities. Japan Tobacco International (JTI) reported that it successfully conducted a series of anti-illicit trade (AIT) seminars for the Georgian State Customs Department. Additionally, JTI sponsored business administration students at several universities in Georgia. ¹⁰⁴						
10. The Government accepts, supports, endorses, or enters into partnerships or non-binding agreements with the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests . (Rec 3.1) <i>NOTE: This must <u>not</u> involve CSR, enforcement activity, or tobacco control policy development since these are already covered in the previous questions.</i>				3		
The Georgian Government sometimes accepts, supports, endorses or enters into partnerships or agreements with the TI. One of the most recent examples of this type of Government support was the financial and technical assistance provided to the hookah factory established by a Lebanese company in Kobuleti in 2022–23. Further details about this tobacco company can be found in the response to question 6 of this report.						
INDICATOR 5: Transparency						
11. The Government does not publicly disclose meetings/interactions with the tobacco industry in cases where such interactions are strictly necessary for regulation. (Rec 2.2)						5
The interactions between the Government and the tobacco industry are not disclosed. TI representatives conduct closed meetings with members of the Parliament, MoESD, MoF, BOO, MoH, and the Administration of the Prime-Minister, which contradicts the provisions of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.						
In its official correspondence, the BOO of Georgia stated that it held only four meetings with tobacco industry representatives during the 2023–2025 period. ¹⁰⁵ However, the BOO did not disclose the topics discussed at these meetings or whether any agreements or commitments were made.						
The amendment on “Tobacco Control” Law adopted in May 2017 requires the Government to adopt a special Decree on Protecting the State Policy Related to Tobacco Control in Public Institutions and Establishing the Rule of Communication of State Servants with the Tobacco Industry (to implement Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC) before September 1, 2018. ¹⁰⁶						
The National Center of Diseases Control of Georgia (NCDC), together with Tobacco Control Alliance in Georgia, prepared a draft of the abovementioned Decree. This should						

¹⁰⁴ Japan Tobacco International. JTI in Georgia. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://www.jti.com/europe/georgia>

¹⁰⁵ Business Ombudsman of Georgia. Response to the FCTC Implementation and Monitoring Center in Georgia, N 00000101, 07/04/2025.

¹⁰⁶ Parliament of Georgia. Amendments to "Tobacco Control" Law, 859-III. May 17, 2017. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3676731?publication=2>

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have been approved by the Government before September 2018. It was sent for approval to the Administration of the Prime-Minister in June 2018. Unfortunately, even after 7 years it is still under consideration. The Parliament adopted a special resolution and addressed the Government on the timely adoption of the Decree on Governments transparency in relation to the TI in April 13, 2021. ^{107,108}						
The NCDC renewed work on the document during 2022 and an agreed upon Governmental draft Decree was uploaded to the Governmental system before the end of 2022, however it is still under discussion at the MoF and the Administration of the Prime Minister as of June 2025. The MoF tries to avoid all related new regulations regarding transparency, not receiving gifts from the TI, and declaring any relations with the TI.						
12. The Government requires rules for the disclosure or registration of tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations, and individuals acting on their behalf including lobbyists. (Rec 5.3)						5
The Government lacks regulations for disclosing or registering tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations, and individuals acting on their behalf, including lobbyists. The adoption of a specific Government Decree to address this issue has remained under consideration by Governmental agencies since 2018.						
INDICATOR 6: Conflict of Interest						
13. The Government does not prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns or to require full disclosure of such contributions. (Rec 4.11) / Never 5 Yes						5
The Government does not prohibit political contributions from the tobacco industry or any entity working to advance its interests.						
14. Retired senior Government officials form part of the tobacco industry (former Prime Minister, Minister, Attorney General) (Rec 4.4)						4
The Transparency International Georgia (TIG) Office investigated corruption negotiations between high officials and local manufacturers. The main authors of the corruption deal were Ivane Chkhartishvili, a multi-millionaire former Minister of Economy and his son Michael Chkhartishvili who owns local tobacco manufacturer “Tbilisi Tobacco.” ¹⁰⁹ Ivane Chkhartishvili is one of the favorite businessmen of favorite businessmen of the Government and owns a local tobacco manufacturer company. ¹¹⁰ It is assumed that he played a key role in influencing the decision to reduce taxes on raw and other types of tobacco products in 2024.						

¹⁰⁷ Parliament of Georgia. Post legislative scrutiny (PLS) on the Law of Georgia “on Tobacco Control” – Final Report. Healthcare and Social Issues Committee of the parliament of Georgia. 2019:

http://www.parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/132419/jandacvis_komit_broshura_ENG_PRINT

¹⁰⁸ Parliament of Georgia. Resolution of the parliament N 455-IVms-Xmp, adopted 13/04/2021.

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5148191?publication=0>

¹⁰⁹ National Agency of Public Registry. Joint stock company “Tbilisi Tobacco”. Extract of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs (non-commercial) legal entities from the registry, last updated: Oct 25, 2022. Retrieved June 23, 2025: <https://bs.napr.gov.ge/GetBlob?pid=400&bid=boVlyOwlsX3qmYsntmLmFIKJx4xbV2HZQKVXMJx28kSEJLBok7xEJ7sefq3Rbeq2>

¹¹⁰ Shota Tkeshelashvili. How many millions of incomes does Ivane Chkhartishvili's tobacco business have? BMG, Sep 20, 2022: <https://bm.ge/ka/article/ramdeni-milionis-shemosavali-aqvs-ivane-chxartishvilis-tambaqos-bizness/116857>

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Former Georgian Health Ministers Andrew Urushadze and Zurab Tchiaberashvili, in collaboration with the PMI-funded Georgian Institute of Social Research (ISR) and the Ukrainian organization “Healthy Initiatives” ^{111,112,113,114} continued participation in both local and international activities related to so-called “tobacco harm reduction” during the 2023–2025 period. ^{115,116}						
15. <u>Current Government officials</u> and relatives hold positions in the tobacco business including consultancy positions. (Rec 4.5, 4.8, 4.10)				3		
Currently, there is no publicly available record of relatives of sitting Government officials holding positions— including consultancy roles—within tobacco companies. However, such information may be intentionally withheld by the tobacco industry, and there is no existing mechanism to prevent or disclose potential conflicts of interest arising from these arrangements.						
Current Deputy Minister of the MoESD, Irakli Nadareishvili, was the commercial director of Imperial Brands in Georgia and Moldova from 2013-2016. ¹¹⁷ Current Deputy Minister of the MoESD, Gennady Arveladze, is strong supporter of TI interest in the Government. ¹¹⁸						
INDICATOR 7: Preventive Measures						
16. The Government has put in place a procedure for disclosing the records of the interaction (such as agenda, attendees, minutes and outcome) with the tobacco industry and its representatives. (Rec 5.1)						5
There is currently no established procedure for disclosing records of interactions between Government or public officials and the tobacco industry, including agendas, lists of attendees, meeting minutes, or other relevant documentation.						

¹¹¹ Healthy Initiatives Presents Research on Georgia’s Illicit Cigarette Market at Prestigious European Conference. The Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 18.09.2023. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/healthy-initiatives-presents-research-on-georgia-s-illicit-cigarette-market-at-prestigious-european-conference/>

¹¹² Healthy Initiatives. Illicit cigarette market in Georgia: Potential impact on smoking prevalence and tax revenues. Presentation was made by Georgian economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze on November 13, 2023. Published on 16.11.2023. Retrieved on June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/illicit-trade-can-science-tackle-it/>

¹¹³ Healthy Initiatives. Smoking Remains a Significant Challenge for the Countries Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The event attended by former Ministers of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze and Mr. Zurab Tchiaberashvili, also economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 16.02.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/english-smoking-remains-a-significant-challenge-for-the-countries-across-eastern-europe-and-central-asia/>

¹¹⁴ Healthy Initiatives. Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases and Smoking Amid War and Crisis: Global and Regional Actions. The event attended by former Minister of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze. Published on 18.06.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/tackling-non-communicable-diseases-and-smoking-amid-war-and-crisis-global-and-regional-actions/>

¹¹⁵ Healthy Initiatives. Smoking Remains a Significant Challenge for the Countries Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The event attended by former Ministers of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze and Mr. Zurab Tchiaberashvili, also economist Giorgi Mzhavanadze. Published on 16.02.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/english-smoking-remains-a-significant-challenge-for-the-countries-across-eastern-europe-and-central-asia/>

¹¹⁶ Healthy Initiatives. Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases and Smoking Amid War and Crisis: Global and Regional Actions. The event attended by former Minister of Health of Georgia Mr. Andrew Urushadze. Published on 18.06.2024. Retrieved June 21, 2025: <https://hi-ua.org/en/news/tackling-non-communicable-diseases-and-smoking-amid-war-and-crisis-global-and-regional-actions5>

¹¹⁷ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, retrieved in June 23, 2025: https://www.economy.ge/?page=deputy-ministers&deputy=73&fname=Irakli_Nadareishvili

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. Gennady Arveladze, Deputy Minister. Retrieved June 22, 2025: https://www.economy.ge/?page=deputy-ministers&deputy=5&fname=გენადი_არველაძე&lang=en

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17. The Government has formulated, adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials, prescribing the standards with which they should comply in their dealings with the tobacco industry. (Rec 4.2); <i>Yes – for whole of Government code; Yes but partial if only MOH</i>					4	
The amendment on “Tobacco Control” Law adopted in May 2017 requires the Government to adopt a special Decree on Protecting the State Policy Related to Tobacco Control in Public Institutions and Establishing the Rule of Communication of State Servants with the Tobacco Industry (to implement Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC) before September 1, 2018.¹¹⁹ The National Center of Diseases Control of Georgia (NCDC), together with Tobacco Control Alliance in Georgia, prepared a draft of the abovementioned Decree. This should have been approved by the Government before May 2018. It was sent for approval to the Administration of the Prime-Minister in June 2018. Unfortunately, even after 7 years it is still under consideration. The Parliament adopted a special resolution and addressed the Government on the timely adoption of the Decree on Governments transparency in relation to the TI in April 13, 2021.^{120,121} The NCDC renewed work on the document during 2022 and an agreed upon Governmental draft Decree was uploaded to the Governmental system before the end of 2022, however it is still under discussion at the MoF and the Administration of the Prime Minister as of June 2025. The MoF tries to avoid all related new regulations regarding transparency, not receiving gifts from the TI, and declaring any relations with the TI.						
18. The Government requires the tobacco industry to periodically submit information on tobacco production, manufacture, market share, marketing expenditures, revenues and any other activity, including lobbying, philanthropy, political contributions <i>and all other TAPS activities such as CSR or EPR (COP10), as well as on tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations and individuals acting on their behalf, and tobacco industry funded groups and their research</i> and marketing activities (Rec 5.2, 5.3, and COP9 and 10 Decision)				3		
There is a limited requirement for the tobacco industry to submit information, primarily for taxation purposes and to provide certain statistical data to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat).¹²² However, the tobacco industry is not required to disclose information related to marketing expenditures, revenue, lobbying efforts, political contributions, or philanthropic activities.						

¹¹⁹ Parliament of Georgia. *Amendments to "Tobacco Control" Law*, 859-III. May 17, 2017. Legislative Herald of Georgia. Retrieved June 22, 2025: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3676731?publication=2>

¹²⁰ Parliament of Georgia. Post legislative scrutiny (PLS) on the Law of Georgia “on Tobacco Control” – Final Report. Healthcare and Social Issues Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. 2019:

http://www.parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/132419/jandacvis_komit_broshura_ENG_PRINT

¹²¹ Parliament of Georgia. Resolution of the Parliament N 455-IVms-Xmp, adopted 13/04/2021.

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5148191?publication=0>

¹²² National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat). Business Statistics. Retrieved June 23, 2025: <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/195/business-statistics>

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19. The Government has a program /system/plan to consistently ¹²³ raise awareness within its departments on policies relating to FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines. (Rec 1.1, 1.2)						5
The Government lacks a structured program or plan to systematically raise awareness among its departments regarding the policies and obligations outlined in the WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines.						
20. The Government has put in place a policy to disallow the acceptance of all forms of contributions/ gifts from the tobacco industry (monetary or otherwise) including offers of assistance, policy drafts, or study visit invitations given or offered to the Government, its agencies, officials and their relatives. (3.4)						5
The Government has not implemented a policy prohibiting contributions or gifts from the tobacco industry, including offers of assistance, draft policy proposals, or invitations for study visits.						
TOTAL	87					

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS	
<i>Based on COP9 and COP10 Decisions highlighting Article 5.3 recommendations</i>	
A. LIABILITY: Government has adopted or enforced mandatory penalties for the tobacco industry in case it provided false or misleading information (Rec 5.4) [5.4 Parties should impose mandatory penalties on the tobacco industry in case of the provision of false or misleading information in accordance with national law.]	
Evidence There are no mandatory penalties in place for the tobacco industry in the event it provides false or misleading information.	
B. KH RESOURCE DATABASE: Government adopted and implemented measures to ensure public access to information on TI activities [5.5 Parties should adopt and implement effective legislative, executive, administrative and other measures to ensure public access, in accordance with Article 12(c) of the Convention, to a wide range of information on tobacco industry activities as relevant to the objectives of the Convention, such as in a public repository.]	
Evidence The Government has not established any measures to ensure public access to information regarding tobacco industry activities.	

¹²³ For purposes of this question, “consistently” means: a. Each time the FCTC is discussed, 5.3 is explained. AND b. Whenever the opportunity arises such when the tobacco industry intervention is discovered or reported.

Annex A: Sources of Information

tax

	TOP MULTINATIONAL TOBACCO GROUPS	MARKET SHARE	BRANDS	SOURCE
1	PMI	41%		Euromonitor 2024
2	JTI	18%		Euromonitor 2024
3	BAT	17%		Euromonitor 2024
4	International marketing Co	7%		Euromonitor 2024

	TOP LOCAL TOBACCO GROUPS	MARKET SHARE	BRANDS	SOURCE
1	Tbilisi Tobacco	6%		Euromonitor 2024

	TOP TOBACCO INDUSTRY ALLIES/ FRONT GROUPS	TYPE (FRONT GROUP, AFFILIATE, INDIVIDUAL)	SOURCE
1	Business Association of Georgia	Front group	https://bag.ge https://tobaccotactics.org/article/business-association-of-georgia/
2	International Chamber of Commerce	Front group	https://iccwbo.org
3	American Chamber of Commerce	Front group	https://www.amcham.ge
4	Georgian Retailers Association	Front group	https://companyinfo.ge/ka/corporations/695829
5	Institute of Social Research (ISR)	Front group	https://www.isr.ge/tobacco-harm-reduction bit.ly/46canHt
6	TV Pirveli	Front group	https://tvpirveli.ge
7	Business Media Georgia (BMG)	Front group	https://bm.ge
8	Georgia Today	Front group	https://georgiatoday.ge
9	Entrepreneur	Front group	https://entrepreneur.com
10	Forbes Georgia	Front group	https://forbes.ge
11	Commersant	Front group	https://commersant.ge

12	David Songulashvili, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture	Individual	https://mepa.gov.ge/En/Minister
13	Gennady Arveladze, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development	Individual	https://www.economy.ge/?page=deputy-ministers&deputy=5&fname=Genadi_Arveladze
14	Irakli Nadareishvili, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development	Individual	https://www.economy.ge/?page=deputy-ministers&deputy=73&fname=Irakli_Nadareishvili
15	Otar Danelia, Business Ombudsman	Individual	https://businessombudsman.ge/en/about-us/business-ombudsman-of-georgia
16	Mr. Isko Dasen, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/5626/biography
17	Mr. Gocha Enukidze, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/2110/biography
18	Mr. Irakli Kirtskhalia, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/8062/biography
19	Ms. Mariam Lashkhi, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/7112/biography
20	Mr. Shota Berekashvili, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/8443/biography
21	Mr. Levan Machavariani, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/8369/biography
22	Mr. Vakhtang Turnava, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/8448/biography
23	Mr. Giorgi Barvenashvili, MP	Individual	https://www.parliament.ge/en/parliament-members/8339/biography
24	Andrew Urushadze, Former Minister of Health	Individual	http://www.nplg.gov.ge/bios/en/00012762/
25	Zurab Chiaberashvili, Former Minister of Health	Individual	http://www.nplg.gov.ge/bios/en/00007494/
26	Levan Jugeli, Former Deputy Minister of Health	Individual	https://www.linkedin.com/in/levan-jugeli-8685b21/?originalSubdomain=ge
27	Giorgi Mzhavanadze, Economist	Individual	https://www.linkedin.com/in/mzhavanadze/