

Czech Republic

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Summary of Findings

1. Industry participation in policy development

There is minimal evidence that the tobacco industry is influencing policy. However, the actual national action plan, National Strategies for the Prevention and Reduction of Harm Associated with Addictive Behavior 2019-2021, includes key points of MPOWER often in general formulation only like "plain packaging - potential discussion will be considered in future" or "taxation - regular increasing" but without any concrete vision.

2. Industry CSR activities

We did not find documented government support of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities.

3. Benefits to the industry

There are signs of communication between the Ministry of Finance and the tobacco industry in raising taxes. The Ministry of Finance, as well as the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture, do not want to disrupt the business of the tobacco industry. They literally do not want to introduce tobacco control policies that could have an impact on the business outputs of tobacco companies (plain packaging, a ban on advertising at the point-of-sale, sales in licensed stores, increasing the affordability of cigarettes).

Today, heated tobacco is only about a quarter of the excise tax, compared to how much people pay in the price of a pack of cigarettes. The tax is calculated differently, according to the weight of the tobacco.

4. Unnecessary interaction

Top-level government officials meet with/foster relations with the tobacco companies such as attending social action events. A representative of Philip Morris is a member of the Board of Directors of the Confederation of Industry and Transport of the Czech Republic.

The Ministry of Finance sent the award to the twenty most important taxpayers including the tobacco industry.

5. Transparency

A clear procedure needs to be established for publishing meetings/interactions with information that government officials may have with the tobacco industry.

6. Conflict of interest

There are two documented cases when former government officials formed part of the tobacco industry.

7. Preventive measures

Tobacco control is a multisectoral issue, thus not only the Ministry of Health but also other relevant Ministries are involved in this field, including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Industry and Trade. However, their commitments for highlighting public health policies among other priorities such as commercial aspects differ. The ministries do not currently view the adoption of efficacy measures as important and even reject the discussion on the possible introduction of individual tobacco control policies in the future.



The Ministry of Finance gave awards to twenty most important taxpayers including the tobacco industry.



Recommendations

1. The government as well as its officials should disclose all records of interaction with the tobacco industry as well as publish all contacts with tobacco industry on its website.
2. Tobacco control should be an issue under the Ministry of Health. The number of employees included in tobacco control should be appropriate. All employees involved in tobacco control tasks should be trained.
3. A ministry that refuses to take effective tobacco control measures should substantiate its arguments with relevant sources.