

Argentina

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Summary of Findings

1. Industry participation in policy development

The tobacco industry (TI) has systematically interfered in the design and implementation of tobacco control policies and in the process of ratification of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (which Argentina has not ratified yet). However, a good aspect is that the TI is not authorized to be a part of the National Tobacco Control Commission convened by the National Ministry of Health.

2. Industry CSR activities

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities are allowed by the Argentinian National Tobacco Control Law. Furthermore, research has shown that different politicians and government agencies, from national and subnational levels, have participated in actions aimed at children, adolescents and women, together with nongovernmental organizations sponsored by the TI.

3. Benefits to the industry

The National Executive Branch has not published the new graphic warnings in the time established by the Legislative Branch. This time gap represents a benefit to the TI, since it conducts its activities guided by the previous regulatory framework.

4. Unnecessary interaction

The participation of policymakers from national and subnational executive branches in events (in-person and online) financed by the TI has been

verified on diverse occasions. Furthermore, the TI has provided technical assistance to security forces regarding tobacco product illicit trade.

5. Transparency

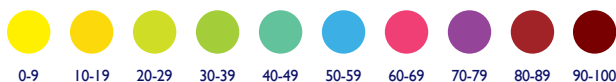
Argentina does not have a registry of associations or companies related to the TI. In addition, meetings between government officials and the TI are generally not public: Civil society is not invited and the encounters are not properly recorded; this has been worse since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, social media helped keep track of the aforementioned meetings.

6. Conflict of interest

The political parties financing law does not include a prohibition for tobacco companies to contribute money to the campaigns of pre-candidates and candidates for positions in the legislative and executive branches. Also, on several occasions, the transfer of public officials to the TI has been detected, and former employees from the TI were hired by the government.

7. Preventive measures

Argentina does not have codes of conduct, plans or systems to discourage the interference of the TI in public policies. The national Ministry of Health is the only branch of the government that has measures (still partial measures) to prevent the interaction between public officials and the TI in the design of tobacco control policies.



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Recommendations

Compared to the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2020, Argentina has worsened in many ways in terms of transparency and tobacco control policies. The following recommendations remain necessary to be enacted:

1. The government should develop a code of conduct aimed at officials from all branches, including clear and binding guidelines, thus restricting interactions between public officials and the TI. Also, the law on political parties must prevent tobacco companies from financing their campaigns. These actions should be taken together with civil society organizations without conflict of interest.
2. As it has been ten years since the National Tobacco Control Law entered into force, there should be amendments in order to completely ban all forms of tobacco product marketing. These new restrictions should include prohibition of the TI's CSR actions and a better system of monitoring and control of effective compliance.
3. The government should develop a registry of companies and associations linked to the TI. This registry should include information about TI lobbyists, both for the national and subnational levels.
4. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control should be ratified.