

Norway

**TOBACCO
INDUSTRY
INTERFERENCE
INDEX
2023**

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Context: The 2023 Norway Tobacco Industry Interference Index (NOTIII) forms part of the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index (GTI), a global survey of how public health policies are protected from the industry's subversive efforts, and how governments have pushed back against this influence. The Tobacco Industry Interference Index (TIII) was initiated by SEATCA as a regional report with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and is part of a global publication of the Global Centre for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC), Thailand. The GTI is supported by the Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Background and Introduction

Tobacco consumption is known to be the single largest avoidable health risk and the most significant cause of premature death in the world¹. The WHO estimates that tobacco kills more than eight million people a year². In Norway, more than 5000 people die every year of tobacco-related diseases³. Relentless efforts are made to regulate this deadly product to reduce its availability and access to the populations⁴.

Tobacco use is an addictive behaviour which took decades to establish and fester. It is a lucrative business promoted by a cynical industry which pretends it is working for a smoke-free Norway⁵, but which constantly innovates (marketing and communication approaches, strategies and channels, introduction of new tobacco and nicotine products, lobbying decision-makers to influence tobacco control policy, etc.) to stay in business and continue to maximise its profits. As an example, Swedish Match Norway increased its sales by 302% between 2020 and 2021.

TOBACCO CONTROL CHALLENGES IN NORWAY

Since the 1970s, the Norwegian authorities have worked purposefully to achieve a tobacco-free society. The recipe has been a combination of measures that shape behaviour, reduce demand, and limit the availability of tobacco products⁶. The outcome is that Norway is one of the OECD countries that has had the strongest decline in smoking. In 2022, close to zero percent of young adults aged 16 to 24 answered that they smoked daily. From 1973 to 2022, the proportion of men who smoke daily fell from 52 to seven percent. For women, the proportion fell from 32 to eight percent. For public health, it is a big step forward. Daily smoking rates have declined, especially among the youth⁷.

However, Norway seems to be resting on its laurels these last years. Consequently, we witness a new uptick of occasional smoking, particularly among young boys/men. Cigarette smoking is becoming “cool” again⁸. The proportion of Norwegians who smoke occasionally has never been higher⁹. 19 per cent among men and 13 per cent among women answer that they smoke occasionally. To a certain extent occasional smoking is considered more acceptable than daily smoking¹⁰. Meanwhile, tobacco farming is surreptitiously creeping back into the country since the last tobacco plantation was abandoned 35 years ago. Tobacco farming is being reintroduced and advertised as entrepreneurship to create jobs and produce “high quality, locally made, and “less harmful” snus” to help un-smoke Norwegians who are addicted to cigarette smoke¹¹ ¹². Meanwhile, Norway is ranking last-but-one in Europe with regards to offering tobacco users the help they need to kick off their addiction¹³ compared to countries and jurisdictions where snus is forbidden. The marketing and lobbying activities of the tobacco industry undermine the full implementation of the legislative and regulatory tobacco control measures. Occasional smoking among young people is

¹ [Tobacco EURO \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/tobacco)

² [Tobacco \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/tobacco)

³ <https://www.fhi.no/en/li/smoking-tobacco/>

⁴ [Tobacco Control in Norway - Helsedirektoratet](https://www.fhi.no/en/nyheter/2023/flere-unge-menn-royker-av-og-til)

⁵ <https://www.pmi.com/markets/norway/nb>

⁶ [Snus, Tobakk | Hensynet til folkehelse går foran tobakksindustriens inntjening \(nettavisen.no\)](https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/nye-royketall-overrasker-mer-akseptabelt/s/5-95-1031097)

⁷ [Tobacco, alcohol and other drugs \(ssb.no\)](https://www.fhi.no/en/nyheter/2023/flere-unge-menn-royker-av-og-til)

⁸ <https://www.fhi.no/en/nyheter/2023/flere-unge-menn-royker-av-og-til>

⁹ <https://www.fhi.no/en/nyheter/2023/flere-unge-menn-royker-av-og-til>

¹⁰ [https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/nye-royketall-overrasker-mer-akseptabelt/s/5-95-1031097](https://www.fhi.no/en/nyheter/2023/flere-unge-menn-royker-av-og-til)

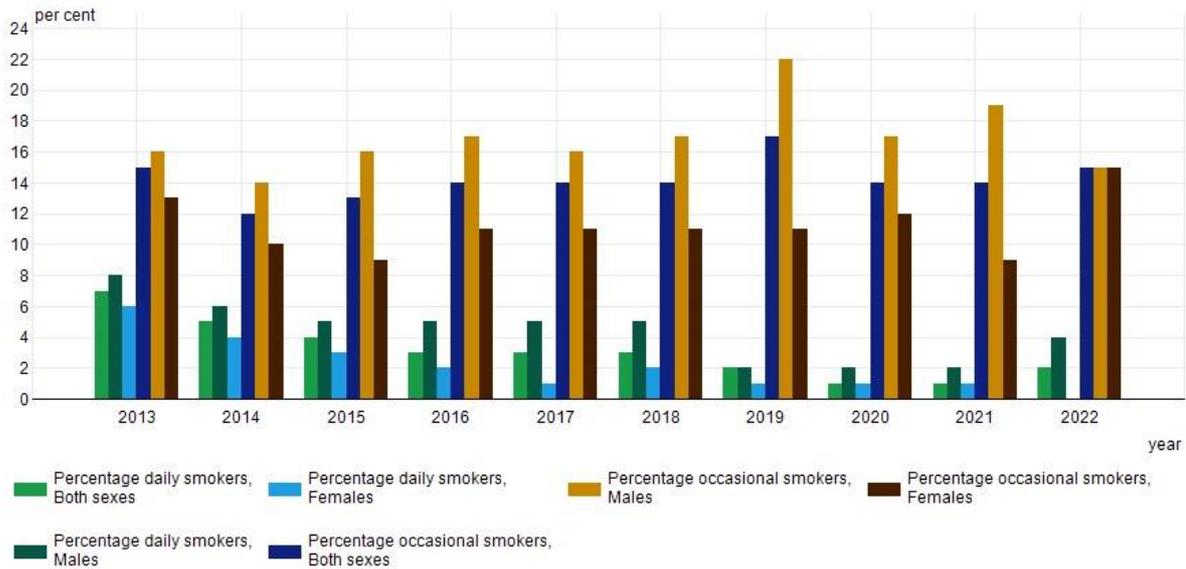
¹¹ [Åker i Trondheim ble tobakksplantasje - VG](https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/nye-royketall-overrasker-mer-akseptabelt/s/5-95-1031097)

¹² [snusbonden.no](https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/nye-royketall-overrasker-mer-akseptabelt/s/5-95-1031097)

¹³ <https://www.tobaccocontrolscale.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/TCS-Report-2021-Interactive-V4.pdf>

increasing, snus use is at a record high, and the tobacco industry is constantly launching new products to appeal to new target groups.

Figure I: [Daily and occasional smoking trends among Norwegians aged 16-24 years](#)¹⁴



Source: Statistics Norway

Among young people, snus and other nicotine products are the most common form of tobacco used¹⁵ ¹⁶. Results of a youth data survey conducted in Oslo in 2023 show that the proportion of young people who use e-cigarettes has also increased from three to 17 per cent in two years¹⁷. Most use e-cigarettes occasionally, and the increase is greatest among girls. The Tobacco Control Act included a ban on the importation and sale of new tobacco and nicotine products. For e-cigarettes, the ban will remain in place until the EU's Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) is implemented in Norway and a new registration scheme comes into force. For the time being, private importation of e-cigarettes is permitted under the medicinal products legislation under further conditions¹⁸. Young people easily buy e-cigarettes online, especially via Snapchat¹⁹. A review of the publications of 55 Norwegian influencers on Instagram²⁰ revealed that 29 of them expose tobacco in a total of 120 posts. 78 of the posts were highlights (Instagram stories), while 42 percent were posts on Instagram.

Snus, which was for long considered to be a product used almost exclusively by men, has become popular among women. Last year, 21 percent of adult men aged 16–74 answered that they used snus daily, while a further five percent used snus occasionally²¹. For women, the corresponding proportions were nine and two percent²². In 2022, 25 per cent of young men aged 16 to 24 years use snus daily. The proportion is 15 per cent for young women in the same age group. In the age group 16–24, 37 per cent of boys and young men and 23 per cent of girls and young women now

¹⁴ <https://www.ssb.no/en/helse/helseforhold-og-levevaner/statistikk/royk-alkohol-og-andre-rusmidler>

¹⁵ <https://www.fhi.no/en/li/smoking-tobacco/>

¹⁶ [Flere unge snuser i Norge enn i Sverige - VG](#)

¹⁷ [Økning i bruk av e-sigaretter - Ungdata](#)

¹⁸ <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Sporsmal/Skriftlige-sporsmal-og-svar/Skriftlig-sporsmal?qid=94077>

¹⁹ [Ungdommens «vape»-kultur: – Helt sykt - VG](#)

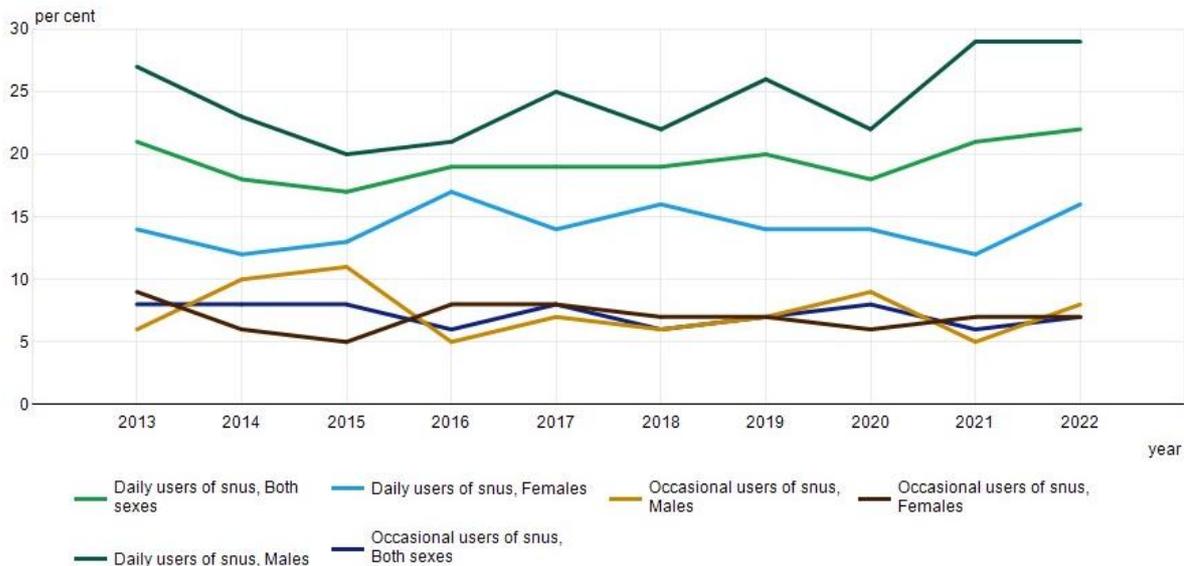
²⁰ <https://kreftforeningen.no/content/uploads/2022/08/tobakk-i-sosiale-medier-kreftforeningen-2021.pdf>

²¹ [07692: Daily users of snus and occasional users of snus \(per cent\), by sex, age, contents and year. Statbank Norway \(ssb.no\)](#)

²² [07692: Daily users of snus and occasional users of snus \(per cent\), by sex, age, contents and year. Statbank Norway \(ssb.no\)](#)

use snus. This is a deeply worrying development. A ban on online sales of tobacco products is one of the most important measures to prevent youth uptake as it will prevent sales to minors and enable better control of imported products. The industry has shown stiff resistance to the proposed measure and has registered support from political parties²³.

Figure 2: [Daily and occasional trends of snus use among Norwegians aged 16-24 years](#)²⁴



Source: Statistics Norway

Against this backdrop of increased youth occasional smoking and huge uptake of nicotine products, there appear false and unsubstantiated claims that current low daily smoking rates are attributable to the availability of snus. These claims suggest that snus has influenced overall tobacco consumption, smoking initiation and cessation²⁵. In a letter to the Director General of the WHO on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day 2021, proponents of tobacco harm reduction singled out Norway as a success story where daily smoking prevalence has sunken because of the displacement of smoking by snus²⁶. These are tobacco industry arguments which undermine tobacco control efforts in Norway. Research evidence show that the chance of failure to quit smoking is the greatest among snus users²⁷.

TOBACCO CONTROL PROSPECTS

On March 31st, 2023, Norway released a Public Health Report (*Folkehelsemeldingen*) with the aim to eliminate/reduce social and health inequalities²⁸. This plan includes a tobacco control strategy with a vision to achieve a tobacco free generation where less than 5% of the population use tobacco. The proposed strategy prioritises, among others, the implementation of FCTC Article 5.3 and its guidelines in line with the Norway's international obligations, smoking ban in outdoor playgrounds, sports arenas and bus stops, as well as in common areas in apartment complexes, and in private cars

²³ <https://www.nettavisen.no/okonomi/nettavisen-erfarer-norske-snusere-kan-juble/s/5-95-1112370>

²⁴ <https://www.ssb.no/en/helse/helseforhold-og-levevaner/statistikk/royk-alkohol-og-andre-rusmidler>

²⁵ [How Has the Availability of Snus Influenced Cigarette Smoking in Norway? - PMC \(nih.gov\).](#)

²⁶ [WNTDLetterMay2021.pdf \(clivebates.com\)](#)

²⁷ [Snus users fail to quit smoking \(sciencenorway.no\)](#)

²⁸ [Helse- og omsorgsministeren presenterer folkehelsemeldinga - regjeringen.no](#)

where children are passengers²⁹ ³⁰. A proposal to ban long distance / online sales of tobacco products and other non-medicinal nicotine products which form part of the strategy may be submitted for a public consultation later this year. The majority of EU countries have introduced bans on online sale of tobacco products already. Countries that do not have a ban experience major challenges with age control in online sales. Many online shops violate the advertising ban. At the same time, we know that young people are particularly influenced by advertising and exposure in social and digital media. These challenges must be addressed to speed up the advent of the tobacco-free generation.

Protecting children and young people from nicotine addiction and associated health risks is one of the highest priorities of the government³¹. Therefore, additional measures like banning the sale of tobacco products to children born in 2010 or later, reducing advertising and exposure to tobacco products in social media, raising awareness on the environmental consequences of tobacco, and putting health warnings on cigarette sticks are also considered.

Norway aims to eventually phase out tobacco products and mitigate the major health and environmental damage caused by tobacco sales and production. Achieving a tobacco-free society is enshrined in the Tobacco Control Act since 2013. There is an overwhelming cross-party agreement that phasing out the tobacco epidemic should take place through stricter legislations, combined with other tobacco prevention measures. Online purchases of tobacco products increased sharply these last years. Now is therefore the right time to act by introducing a ban. Such a measure is in line with the WHO FCTC and the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (ITP) that Norway ratified.

Tobacco's harms to people and the environment are emphasised in the document. The importance of the WHO FCTC and Norway's obligations as a party to the FCTC are also highlighted. The targets of the Public Health Plan are aspirational. All levels of government are required to take their responsibilities seriously and ensure the full implementation of the proposed measures to take the country closer to the reduced levels of tobacco use they aim to achieve across all age groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Norway scores a total of 43 points, which is a minor improvement compared to the 44 points in the previous Index in 2021³². The slight positive development can be ascribed to the partial reversal³³ of the tax/price and sales incentives given to the industry in 2020. The Public Health Report, including the Tobacco Control Strategy, is also an important development. However, the recommendations formulated in the 2021 Index are not fully implemented yet. Therefore, they remain valid and should be acted upon. In addition, Norway should:

- Implement FCTC art 5.3 into the Tobacco Control Act to protect tobacco control policy from all commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.
- Create a publicly available lobby register to guarantee full transparency when it comes to the tobacco industry's interactions with parliamentary representatives, and possibly the political leadership in the ministries and in the Prime Minister's office.
- Ensure the continued de-normalisation of the tobacco industry and tobacco use.

²⁹ <https://www.nrk.no/nyheter/regjeringen-foreslar-forbud-av-nettsalg-av-tobakksvarer-og-e-sigaretter-1.16359746>

³⁰ <https://www.altinget.no/artikkel/her-er-de-viktigste-punktene-i-folkehelsemeldingen>

³¹ <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Sporsmal/Skriftlige-sporsmal-og-svar/Skriftlig-sporsmal/?qid=94077>

³² <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/country/NO>

³³ <https://www.toll.no/en/goods/alcohol-and-tobacco/quotas/>

- Require that the tobacco industry disclose their sales volumes, profit margins, product contents, and advertising and promotional activities to improve transparency.
- Place a levy on the tobacco industry's profits to fund tobacco cessation and tobacco control advocacy programmes across the country, and for the management of tobacco waste.
- Rescind and destroy the "Golden Key", which give former MPs unlimited and unimpeded access to Parliament to prevent them from taking advantage of the opportunity to lobby parliamentarians³⁴ on behalf of tobacco industry and other industries with products which are harmful to health and the environment.
- Contribute to the qualification of cigarette butts, the most littered plastic items which pollutes our planet, as avoidable and problematic plastics during the negotiations for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. Cigarette filters should be banned to protect both health and environment.

Summary Findings

I INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

(Summarize your evidence/ main points in questions 1-4)

According to the Minister of Health and Care Services, most Norwegian parliamentarians are sensitised and have woken up to the importance of FCTC article 5.3.

However, considering the revelations that former MPs have a "Golden Key" which give them unimpeded access to the national assembly, the fact that former MPs have joined the tobacco industry as senior paid staff and lobbyists, and information that the Minister of Research and higher education have accepted an invitation to visit a tobacco plantation from tobacco farmers/snus producers, there is no guarantee that the tobacco industry has not made attempts to influence policy development.

In addition, the Ministry of Finance has yearly contacts with the tobacco industry to discuss information relating to illicit tobacco sales/smuggling etc. as part of assessing the tax level. The Norwegian government does not invite industry representatives to attend policy meetings, but there are instances where industry representatives participate in informal parliamentary meetings with the Progress Party³⁵. The tobacco industry was allowed to provide responses to public regulatory consultations.

2 INDUSTRY CSR ACTIVITIES

(Summarize your evidence/ main points in question 5)

On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day 2022 – the theme of which was "Tobacco: Threat to our Environment" – Philip Morris Norway published an article³⁶ to express their concern for nature and the environment. They argue that they are dedicated to limiting the plastic litter associated with cigarette butts, and that they are seeking the cooperation and help of business and municipalities to make it happen. PM Norway took on itself the responsibility to inform the people that cigarette butts contain plastic, so that they themselves can contribute to managing the waste responsibly. PM Norway advised shops and festivals to sell pocket ashtrays, and municipalities to make it easier to get rid of tobacco waste in a responsible way by putting in place proper infrastructure such as waste containers with ashtrays before the festival season starts.

³⁴ <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/k6omzX/kreftforeningen-ta-fra-tobakkslobbyist-gullkortet>

³⁵ [Snus, Snusbonde | Her inntar tobakkslobbyen Stortinget \(nettavisen.no\)](https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/innlandet/snus-snusbonde-her-inntar-tobakkslobbyen-stortinget)

³⁶ [Sigarettneiper er laget av plast - smp.no](https://www.smp.no/nyheter/sigarettsneiper-er-laget-av-plast)

Furthermore, few people are aware of the negative impacts of the tobacco industry on the environment and climate. The Public Health Report (*Folkehelsemeldingen*), including the new tobacco control strategy, was debated in parliament (*Storting*) on 2 June. A clear majority of MPs are in favour of introducing a public smoking cessation service. However, no budget is allocated to such an important public service in the national budget for 2023 and no funding mechanism is set up to generate resources to finance it.

In a recent article³⁷ in a Norwegian daily paper in response to a call³⁸ by the Norwegian Cancer Society and Friends of the Earth Norway (*Naturvernforbundet*) for a levy on the tobacco industry's profits to fund tobacco cessation and tobacco waste management, PM Norway boasted that it contributes already to the Norwegian economy and called for partnership with the health and environmental organisations: "We make a significant contribution to public finances and pay our taxes with pleasure. In the state budget for 2023, the government predict 7.45 billion in contributions from tax on tobacco products." In reality, taxes are paid by addicted tobacco users, not the industry. Tobacco-caused diseases cost more than 80 billion Krone every year to the Norwegian health budget³⁹. So, taxes collected from the sales of tobacco products is dismal compared to the amount of money invested to remedy the consequences of their use.

Meanwhile, Swedish Match set pop up stores to sell snus. The booths are equipped with containers to collect snus waste (pouches and boxes) to protect the environment.

Picture: A pop-up snus store with an outside container to collect snus waste (*Avfallspann for snus*): used pouches (*brukte snusposer*) and empty snus boxes (*tomme snusbokser*) – Courtesy Gry Ekeberg Bodin.



³⁷ [Philip Morris: – Vi deler Kreftforeningens ønske om å begrense skadene knyttet til røyking – Dagsavisen](#)

³⁸ [Send rekninga til tobakksindustrien – Dagsavisen](#)

³⁹ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-15-20222023/id2969572/?ch=3#kap4-2>

Norway is a leading voice in the UNEP's Plastic Treaty negotiations and a member of the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for a Plastic Treaty. During the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Plastic Treaty (INC-2) in Paris, the HAC put out a statement calling "for binding provisions in the treaty to eliminate and restrict unnecessary, avoidable, or problematic plastics, as well as the plastic polymers, chemical constituents and plastic products that are of particular concern due to their adverse effects on the environment and human health, taking into account the precautionary principle and considering their impact on circularity"⁴⁰. Cigarette butts are avoidable and problematic plastics, and the draft Treaty must include a ban on cigarette filters.

3 BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

(Summarize your evidence/ main points in questions 6-7)

Tobacco products are still sold in tax-free shops at points of entry and exit (airports, ports, ferries, etc ...)

The Center Party's parliamentary group, a member of the coalition in power, rejected the government's proposal for a generational ban on tobacco as well as a ban on flavours in snus⁴¹.

The visit of the Minister of Research and Higher Education to the farmers/snus producers, in defiance of his partners in government, is by itself a hand held out to the tobacco industry and it will not fail to seize it and exploit the situation to further protect its interests.

4 UNNECESSARY INTERACTION

(Summarize your evidence/ main points in questions 8-10)

Snusbonden - Norwegian tobacco farmers (the first tobacco farmers in 28 years) and snus producers - invited and received the visit of the Minister of Research and Higher Education to voice their opposition to the proposed ban on the online sale of tobacco products. They fear they will go bankrupt⁴² if the ban is introduced. The minister hails from the Center Party, which is very friendly with farmers in general, and the tobacco farm is located in his electoral district. He is also a daily snus user. The minister met the farmers in defiance of his partners of the Labour Party in government, just two days before the Parliamentary Health Committee was to consider the proposal contained in the Public Health Report (*Folkehelsemeldingen*).

Nothing substantive transpired from his discussions with the tobacco farmers/snus producers, but the farmers expressed their satisfaction that someone from government responded favourably to their invitation. The farmers also expressed their hope to be listed in the agricultural catalogue, together with carrots and potatoes because they are producing less harmful products which deserve differentiated treatment by the legislature. An invitation is also extended to the Agriculture and Food Minister from the same political party.

5 TRANSPARENCY

(Summarize your evidence/ main points in questions 11-12)

⁴⁰ [High Ambition Coalition Joint Ministerial Statement INC-2 - High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution : High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution \(hactoendplasticpollution.org\)](#)

⁴¹ [Klar tobakksbeskjed til egen regjering: Uaktuelt med forbud - VG](#)

⁴² [Norsk snusbonde frykter konkurs – ber statsråder komme til gården - TV 2](#)

The biggest Norwegian tabloid newspaper, VG, revealed that former members of parliament have a “Golden Key”⁴³ to the parliamentary building even after their term of office is over. This means that they have unlimited and unrestricted access to their former colleagues without having to enter their name into the visitors’ register. Former representatives of the *Storting* (Norwegian Parliament) can come and go as they please, for life. That arrangement also applies to those who work as lobbyists. At the time of the disclosure, at least 50 former MPs with free and perpetual access to the *Storting* were working as lobbyists to influence policy on behalf the tobacco industry, seafood and other powerful organisations. These former politicians are also free to bring many guests into the National Assembly.

6 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

(Summarize your evidence/ main points in questions 13-15)

The Progress Party (FrP) is the most tobacco industry friendly party in the Norwegian political landscape. They have systematically endorsed a liberal tobacco control policy. The Progress Party argue that informed individuals have the right to make their own decisions – for good or bad - without any interference from the government. After the launch of the draft tobacco control strategy, they vowed to prevent its implementation⁴⁴. They openly invite the tobacco industry to Parliament even if other parties adhere to the provisions of the FCTC and do not meet up.

Recently, the national broadcaster, NRK, revealed that an FrP politician borrowed money from the communications director of Swedish Match and from a senior adviser of a PR agency which has Swedish Match on its client list. Said politician was advocating for the introduction of tobacco-free snus⁴⁵ – which Swedish Match is the producer – into the country. He admitted that he borrowed money from tobacco industry sources he called “friends” when he moved on to become a journalist⁴⁶. Further, he borrowed money from people he interviewed. He even offered to be paid to write articles⁴⁷.

7 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(Summarize your evidence/ main points in questions 16-20)

⁴³ <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/Qy6KXR/gullkortet-minst-50-med-fri-tilgang-jobber-med-aa-paavirke-politikere>

⁴⁴ [Snus. Ingvild Kjekol | Hoksrud vil stanse Kjerkols planer: – Arrogant! \(nettavisen.no\)](https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/ingvild-kjekol-hoksrud-vil-stanse-kjerkols-planer-arrogant)

⁴⁵ [NRK: Frp jobbet for tobakksfri snus. Samtidig lånte kommunikasjonssjefen penger av tobakkslobbyister. \(aftenposten.no\)](https://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/nyhetsbrev/2018/08/14/nrk-frp-jobbet-for-tobakksfri-snus-samtidig-lante-kommunikasjonssjefen-penger-av-tobakkslobbyister)

⁴⁶ <https://m24.no/amedia-espen-teigen-gunnar-stavrum/nettavisen-ville-slette-espen-teigen-sakene-na-er-de-ikke-like-sikre/582493>

⁴⁷ [Espen Teigen tilbød kilde å skrive saker mot betaling: – En dødssynd \(nettavisen.no\)](https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/espen-teigen-tilbød-kilde-å-skrive-saker-mot-betaling-en-dødssynd)

Despite all the criticism after the revelations that former MPs have a “Golden Key” which gives them unrestricted access to Parliament, a large majority of MPs voted in favour of allowing their former colleagues to retain free access to the National Assembly⁴⁸. They get to keep their “golden Key”. They just have to sign a declaration that they will not influence colleagues and register at the reception like other visitors when lobbying. This voluntary arrangement does not give clarity on who meets whom and about what. Therefore, it does not contribute to more transparency. The best solution is a register that uses both the visitor log and the representatives' calendar.

MPs from the Red Party (*Rødt*) and Socialist Left Party (*SV*) suggested the creation of a lobby register⁴⁹ but did not win the support of the majority. This idea is not new though. Back in 2020, the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) recommended that Norway introduce rules/principles and guidelines for how members of the political leadership should have contact with lobbyists and other third parties seeking to influence government processes and decisions, and to increase transparency about the purpose of such contacts.

GRECO notes that although administrative corruption and petty bribery are almost non-existent, there are other corruption-related challenges that are relevant in the Norwegian context, such as close networks and conflicts of interest^{50 51}. A publicly available lobby register containing information about who is in contact with whom, which matter is relevant, and who the lobbyist represents, should be available to citizens both when it comes to parliamentary representatives and the political leadership in the ministries and in the Prime Minister's office.

Norway

Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023

Results and Findings

	0	1	2	3	4	5
INDICATOR 1: Level of Industry Participation in Policy-Development						
1. The government ⁵² 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. ⁵³ in setting or implementing public health policies in relation to tobacco control ⁵⁴ (Rec 3.4)	0					
No evidence was found to suggest that the government accepts or endorses any offer of assistance when setting or implementing tobacco control policy.						
2. The government accepts, supports, or endorses <u>policies or legislation drafted</u> by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry. (Rec 3.4)	0					
No evidence was found to show the government accepts or endorses policies or legislation drafted by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry.						
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) 1 Never 5 Yes		1				
The government does not allow/invite the tobacco industry to sit in government multisectoral committee that sets public health policy.						
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) ⁵⁵ (Rec 4.9 & 8.3) For non-COP year, follow the previous score of COP year. For non-Parties, apply a score of '0'		1				
Tobacco industry representative do not form part of the government delegation to the COP or its related meetings.						
INDICATOR 2: Industry CSR activities						
5. A. Government agencies or their officials endorse, support, form partnerships with or participates in activities of the tobacco industry described as “socially responsible” or “sustainable”. For example, environmental programs. (Rec 6.2) B. The government (its agencies and officials) receives CSR contributions ⁵⁶ (monetary or otherwise, including CSR contributions) from the tobacco industry or those working to further its interests during the pandemic. (Rec 6.4) <i>NOTE: exclude enforcement activities as this is covered in another question</i>	0					
Although the tobacco industry conduct PR activities to portray itself as environment-friendly, there were no tobacco related CSR activities conducted in Norway that involved any						

⁵² 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

⁵³ The term, “tobacco industry” includes those representing its interests or working to further its interests, including the State-owned tobacco industry.

⁵⁴ “Offer of assistance” may include draft legislation, technical input, recommendations, oversees study tour

⁵⁵ Please annex a list since 2009 so that the respondent can quantify the frequency,
<http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/en/>

⁵⁶ political, social financial, educations, community, technical expertise or training to counter smuggling or any other forms of contributions

	0	1	2	3	4	5
government official.						
<p>The government should put a levy on the industry's profits to finance tobacco cessation and tobacco waste management. "Polluters pay" has been a leading principle within Norwegian environmental management for over 40 years. Companies are encouraged to do more to pollute less and ensure that waste is managed in an environmentally friendly way. Moreover, industries that impose large costs on society are required to pay their share of the bill through extended producer responsibility.</p>						
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 for PHW, Tax increase can be implemented within 1 month) (Rec 7.1)	0					
No evidence						
7. The government gives privileges, incentives, tax exemptions or benefits to the tobacco industry (Rec 7.3)			2			
<p>In 2020 Norway decided to reduce the tax on snus by 25 per cent in real terms effective from 1 January 2021. At that time, Norway applied duty-free allowances on tobacco products for personal use with an upper limit of 200 cigarettes or 250 grams of other tobacco products (snus/snuff, cigars and cigarillos are counted in grams) and 200 sheets of cigarette paper. The same quotas applied for cross-border purchases of tobacco products. There was even a possibility to substitute tobacco for alcohol (and vice versa) for import.</p> <p>The new government assumed office with the aim to be tougher on the tobacco industry. Consequently, the measures introduced in 2020 are partially reversed⁵⁷. Travelers can no longer exchange the duty-free quota for tobacco products with duty-free alcoholic beverages</p> <p>On January 1st, 2023, new quotas were introduced for what Norwegians can bring home when travelling. 100 cigarettes, 125 grams of other tobacco products or 100 grams of nicotine products and 100 cigarette papers, are allowed^{58 59 60} into the country. The rules only apply to residents of Norway. The quotas of 2021 are therefore reduced by half.</p> <p>A new tobacco control strategy is also proposed with more restrictive measures to fight the tobacco epidemic and counter the industry's influence. Provisions of the strategy include more smoke-free outdoor areas to help de-normalise tobacco use, a ban on online sales of tobacco products, a ban on flavourings in e-cigarettes, smoking ban in outdoor playgrounds, sports areas and bus stops, as well as in common areas in apartment complexes, and in private cars where children are passengers.</p>						
INDICATOR 4: Forms of Unnecessary Interaction						
8. Top level government officials (such as President/ Prime Minister or Minister ⁶¹) 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)				3		
<p>The Minister of Research and Higher education responded to the invitation of tobacco farmers/snus producers in his electoral district. He reportedly sat with them for two hours, drank</p>						

⁵⁷ [Stortingsvedtak om særavgifter for 2023 - Avgift på tobakksvarer mv. - Lovdata](#)

⁵⁸ <https://e24.no/norsk-oekonomi/i/BWGlzE/ikke-lenger-mulig-aa-kjoepe-200-sigaretter-i-kartong-paa-taxfree?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aftenposten.no>

⁵⁹ <https://www.dagsavisen.no/nyheter/innenriks/2023/02/24/regjeringen-har-vurdert-a-forby-tobakk-for-kommende-generasjoner/>

⁶⁰ [Alcohol and tobacco quotas - Norwegian Customs \(toll.no\)](#)

⁶¹ Includes immediate members of the families of the high-level officials

	0	1	2	3	4	5
coffee, learned about Norwegian tobacco production, and tried/tasted their snus ⁶² . The Minister is himself a daily snus user. This sets a dangerous precedent when we know that the tobacco farmers/snus producers are against the proposed ban on the online sales of tobacco products. Public consultations around the proposal will be announced soon and there is no clarity as to where the minister and his political party stand.						
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)	0					
No evidence found to back this claim.						
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 not involve CSR, enforcement activity, or tobacco control policy development since these are already covered in the previous questions.</i>	0					
There was no evidence found that the government accepts or endorses or enter into partnership with the tobacco industry.						
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 Ministry of Finance does not publicly disclose their interactions with the tobacco industry. Every year the Ministry of Finance receives information from the Tobacco Industry's Joint Office about their annual survey where they measure the proportion of cigarettes that originate from places other than Norwegian trade. The survey is published on the website of the Tobacco Industry's Joint Office ⁶³ . The Ministry is still in contact to obtain information about this survey, they confirmed this in a letter dated 29.04.2021.						
Revelations by tabloid newspaper, VG, of the existence of a "Golden Key" ⁶⁴ which gives unlimited and unrestricted access to former MPs-turned-lobbyists to the National Assembly are also disconcerting. At the time of the revelations, at least 50 former MPs with free and perpetual access to the <i>Storting</i> were working as lobbyists to influence policy on behalf of the tobacco industry, the seafood industry, and other powerful organisations. Parliament resisted calls to rescind the "Golden Key" altogether. Recommendations by the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) of the European Commission to put in place a transparency register has so far been ignored.						
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
To our knowledge, such rules do not exist. The information pertaining to FCTC article 5.3 provided in this report ⁶⁵ predate the survey period, but it is still relevant.						
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
According to the 2014 country report additional questionnaire submitted by the government to the COP, the government does not prohibit such contributions as mentioned above.						

⁶² <https://www.nettavisen.no/okonomi/fikk-uventet-telefon-matte-google-hvem-han-var/s/5-95-1113204>

⁶³ <https://www.tobakkif.no/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/Qy6KXR/gullkortet-minst-50-med-fri-tilgang-jobber-med-aa-paavirke-politikere>

⁶⁵ https://untobaccocontrol.org/impldb/wp-content/uploads/reports/norway_2014_aq.pdf

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Evidence also emerged that a politician from a party which is advocating for liberal tobacco control policies and even invites tobacco industry representatives to parliament, borrowed money from tobacco industry executives and workers. He even offered to write commissioned articles for pay when he became a journalist.						
Except for e-cigarettes and hookah tobacco, the ban against the importation and sale of new tobacco and nicotine products was lifted on 1 July 2021 and replaced with an approval scheme for new tobacco and nicotine products.						
14. Retired senior government officials form part of the tobacco industry (former Prime Minister, Minister, Attorney General) (Rec 4.4)	0					
No retired senior government officials have been identified as holding positions in the tobacco business.						
15. Current government officials and relatives hold positions in the tobacco business including consultancy positions. (Rec 4.5, 4.8, 4.10)	0					
No current government officials have been identified as holding positions in the tobacco business.						
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 no procedure for disclosing records of any interaction with the tobacco industry. Parliament resisted calls to rescind a "Golden Key" which gives incognito lobbying opportunities to former PMs and recommendations to put in place a transparency register has so far been ignored.						
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>1 for whole of government code; 2 for Yes but partial if only MOH</i>			2			
Yes, but only MOH. The Ministry of Health and its agencies have a clear policy on Art. 5.3. The political leaders of the Ministry do not meet with the industry. The administrative staff only meet with the industry when it is necessary for regulatory purposes						
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 and all other activities. (5.2)						5
To our knowledge the government does not require 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 and all other activities.						
However, the government contacts the tobacco industry for information. The Ministry of Finance has contact with the tobacco industry every year to obtain information and figures relating to illicit tobacco sales/smuggling etc. as part of assessing the tax level.						
19. The government has a program / system/ plan to consistently ⁶⁶ raise awareness within its departments on policies relating to FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines. (Rec 1.1, 1.2)						4

⁶⁶ 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.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
MOH does. The political leaders of the MOH do not meet with the industry. The administrative staff only meet with the industry when it is necessary for regulatory purposes. However, there is no program to consistently raise awareness with the various agencies about Article 5.3 guidelines.						
The Minister of Research and Higher Education met with tobacco farmers/ snus producers in his home district, just before the new tobacco control strategy is launched.						
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
No specific policy to disallow contributions from the tobacco industry exists.						
TOTAL SCORE						43

Annex A: Sources of Information

	TOP TOBACCO COMPANIES/ DISTRIBUTORS	BRANDS	SOURCE
1	Philip Morris Norway ⁶⁷ AS PM tobakk Norge AS	Shiro, Kapten, Marlboro, L&M, Petterøes, Blue Master	https://www.regnskapstall.no/regnskapstall-for-philip-morris-norway-as-10111881051
2	British American Tobacco Norway AS	Dunhill, Kent, Lucky Strike, Pall Mall and Rothmans	https://www.regnskapstall.no/regnskapstall-for-british-american-tobacco-norway-as-10065208451
3	Swedish Match Distribution AS Swedish Match Norge AS	Snus, nicotine pouches, cigars, etc.	https://www.regnskapstall.no/informasjon-om-swedish-match-norge-as-10087664352
4	Imperial Tobacco Norway AS	West, Davidoff, Gauloises and JPS, Golden Virginia fine cut tobacco, Rizla rolling papers, Backwoods cigars, Skruf and Zone X (snus)	https://www.regnskapstall.no/regnskapstall-for-imperial-brands-norway-as-10012959151
5	Conrad Langaard AS	Al Capone, Moods (Cigarillos); Roll-your-own and pipe tobacco ⁶⁸	https://www.regnskapstall.no/informasjon-om-conrad-langaard-as-10012758251

⁶⁷ <https://www.pmi.com/media-center/news/PMI-progresses-toward-sole-ownership-of-swedish-match>: Philip Morris purchased Swedish Match back in November 2022. The tobacco manufacturer has now acquired the snus producer to better peddle its “harm-reduction” narrative.

⁶⁸ <https://www.conrad-langaard.no/produkter/>

	TOP MEDIA/ NEWSPAPERS	URL
1	VG	Tobakk - VG
2	Nettavisen	Nettavisen
3	Dagbladet	tobakk - dagbladet.no
4	NRK	Røyk og tobakk – Alle artikler – NRK
5	Aftenposten	Aftenposten
6	TV2	Tobakk - TV2.no
7	Dagens Næringsliv	tobakk - Emneside DN
8	E24	Tobakk – E24
9	Bergens Tidende	Bergens Tidende (bt.no)
10	Dagsavisen	Tobakk - Dagsavisen

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