

Italy



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

There is no law or policy in place, or under discussion, that regulates or limits the involvement of the tobacco industry (TI) in setting or implementing public health policies. As a result, there are no restrictions on TI offers of assistance.

Transnational tobacco companies are treated by the government as major investors in the country. They are considered partners in national development, particularly by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests, and the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (formerly the Ministry of Economic Development). This treatment allows the TI to exert influence on public health and tobacco control policies.

2. Industry CSR Activities

There is documented evidence that government agencies and officials publicly endorsed and participated in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives promoted by major transnational tobacco companies. These activities were framed around environmental sustainability and circular economy themes, aligning with TI strategies to enhance public legitimacy.

The Ministry of Environment supported and sponsored CSR programs of British American Tobacco (BAT) and Japan Tobacco International (JTI). These initiatives aimed to raise awareness about cigarette butt litter and promote proper disposal, effectively allowing the TI to position itself as a partner in environmental protection.

3. Benefits to the Industry

Heated tobacco products (HTPs) and e-cigarettes continue to benefit from fiscal and regulatory privileges that are not aligned with scientific evidence. These products are taxed at rates around 60 percent lower than conventional cigarettes. This favorable treatment is officially justified by claims of reduced health risk, but independent studies question these claims and highlight ongoing health concerns.

HTPs and e-cigarettes are not covered by comprehensive advertising bans. This allows manufacturers to market these products both online and offline, often targeting young people and promoting harm reduction. These gaps undermine tobacco control goals and provide the TI with disproportionate freedom to expand its market.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

In June 2023, the Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy, the President of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region, and other officials attended the inauguration of the Trieste Innovation Hub, a major BAT investment in new tobacco and nicotine products, including Velo nicotine pouches. In May 2023, Philip Morris International (PMI) opened its Digital Information Service Center in Campania, focused on digital services and customer care for smoke-free products. The event was attended by the Minister for European Affairs and other officials.



5. Transparency

All major transnational tobacco companies operating in Italy, including BAT, JTI, and PMI, are registered in the Italian Parliament's lobbyist registry.

Official records of meetings with TI lobbyists are available only for selected government bodies, such as the Chamber of Deputies and the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy. However, there are no specific rules requiring the disclosure or registration of interactions with the TI, nor regulations requiring disclosure of affiliated organizations.

6. Conflict of Interest

There is no law prohibiting contributions from the TI or from organizations advancing its interests to political parties, candidates, or election campaigns.

7. Preventive Measures

Although Italy has adopted WHO FCTC-related legislation, awareness of its provisions, particularly Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, remains limited among government staff outside the Ministry of Health. There is no program, system, or plan to consistently raise awareness across departments regarding TI interference.

The government has not implemented a policy prohibiting the acceptance of contributions or gifts from the TI, whether monetary or otherwise, including offers of assistance, policy drafts, or study visit invitations to government agencies, officials, or their relatives.