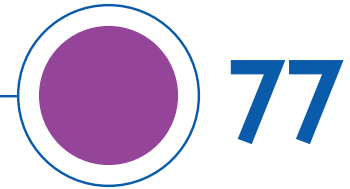


Türkiye



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Türkiye, a semi-public foundation, promoted the legalization of alternative tobacco products in its 2023 report funded by the Philip Morris-funded Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (now Global Action to End Smoking). The tobacco industry (TI) lobbied for changes to the Special Consumption Tax (SCT) structure, resulting in the ad valorem tax being reduced from 63 percent to 50 percent, while excise levels were significantly increased in early 2024. This shift allowed tobacco companies to keep price increases below official inflation levels. In addition, the Foreign Economic Relations Board and the Türkiye Exporters' Assembly, both semi-governmental industry bodies, include TI representatives as members and executives, enabling indirect influence on public health policy. Despite this, the TI is not part of Türkiye's government delegation to the WHO FCTC Conference of the Parties.

2. Industry CSR Activities

In 2023, Philip Morris Türkiye organized the "Leader Women Farmers Program" for the fifth time, featuring speeches from government officials, industry representatives, and academics on tobacco farming, modernization, sustainability, environmental practices, and exports. Philip Morris International (PMI), Japan Tobacco International (JTI), and KT&G also contributed funds to

earthquake relief efforts. However, the lack of transparency from both the government and the TI makes it difficult to track these contributions, raising concerns that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is being used to improve the industry's public image.

3. Benefits to the Industry

No new tobacco control laws or amendments were submitted to Parliament during the review period, and there is no evidence of the government granting the TI extensions or postponements of existing regulations. While incentives for the TI are not legally appropriate in Türkiye, the Ministry of Industry and Technology granted investment incentives, including VAT and customs duty exemptions, tax reductions, bank interest support, and insurance premium employer share exemptions, to 14 tobacco companies, including Philip Morris and CAGS Tobacco.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

The Turkish Exporters Assembly hosted the "Export Champions" award ceremony in Istanbul, attended by the President, several ministers, and other senior officials, where JTI Tobacco Products Industry Inc. received the "Tobacco Sector Export Champion" award. The Tobacco Industrialists Association also launched the "Illegal Out the Door" campaign, supported by Philip Morris Türkiye, BAT Türkiye, JTI Türkiye, and Imperial Tobacco Türkiye, involving 150,000 licensed tobacco-selling grocers. Framed as an enforcement initiative against illicit trade, the campaign



proposed three legislative amendments: increasing prison sentences for unlicensed tobacco trade to between three and six years, banning online sales of illegal production equipment, and confiscating vehicles used in illicit trade. Separately, BAT Türkiye launched the “Smuggling Must Be Prevented” media campaign highlighting the risks of untaxed and unregulated e-cigarettes, while simultaneously advocating for legalization of e-cigarette production and sales in Türkiye and pledging a USD 200 million investment, 1,500 jobs, and increased exports if approved.

5. Transparency

The government does not publicly disclose its meetings or interactions with the TI, although it is known that such meetings occur with the tobacco agriculture sector, which authorities claim are necessary. There are no requirements for the disclosure or registration of TI entities, affiliated organizations, or individuals acting on their behalf, including lobbyists, and no policy is under consideration to address this.

6. Conflict of Interest

Tunisia lacks specific legislation prohibiting TI contributions to political parties, candidates, or campaigns. Official reports document financial arrangements where the state tobacco agency covered expenses for Ministry of Finance staff and provided tobacco products as monthly allowances to government officials, creating financial dependencies across multiple departments.

7. Preventive Measures

The government has not adopted procedures for disclosing records of interactions with the TI. It has not developed or implemented a code of conduct for public officials prescribing standards for dealings with the industry. There is also no program to consistently raise awareness among government departments about obligations under Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Stop treating the TI as a contributor to the national economy, for example as export champions or highly valued taxpayers.
2. Provide disincentives for tobacco product manufacturing and trade to discourage the industry’s expansion in domestic and foreign markets.
3. Raise corporate taxes on tobacco companies and implement pricing controls to prevent the TI from benefitting from lower taxes and pricing freedoms.
4. Increase political accountability by requiring public officials and politicians to adhere to obligations under the WHO FCTC.
5. Adopt regulations to implement Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, ensuring stricter controls over the TI to protect public health.