

Paraguay



Summary of Findings

1. INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Despite several pro-industry pronouncements, this period saw a reduction in tobacco industry (TI) interference in public policymaking.

The promulgation of the Protocol for the Elimination of the Illicit Trade of Tobacco Products is a significant victory in the fight against cigarette smuggling.

2. INDUSTRY CSR ACTIVITIES

Despite the industry's extensive propaganda campaign, particularly in claims about providing employment and contribution to the treasury, it did not attain the levels of interference as in previous years. A series of open interactions between the TI and the government were validated, in the forms of assistance, agreements, and donations.

3. BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

Paraguay continues to have the region's lowest tax burden. Current taxes barely cover around 20% of the costs associated with public health.

4. UNNECESSARY INTERACTION

Reports on instances of corruption involving government officials are growing. There is evidence of bribery or political campaign financing in exchange for policies favorable to the TI. This has recently compromised the integrity of government institutions, undermining trust in the country's democratic system.

5. TRANSPARENCY

Transparency of the government is lacking within the ruling party despite efforts to minimize the undue influence of the TI in public health policymaking.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Despite efforts to reduce conflicts of interest between the government and the industry, the ruling party's parliamentary force which is linked to the current president-elect of the government party, Horacio Cartes, has a direct influence on decisions favorable to the TI.

7. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Preventive measures to avoid TI interference in public policymaking are currently under consideration.



Recommendations

1. Implement policies that prohibit interaction between public officials and the TI. This may include restrictions on the acceptance of gifts, financing, or any other form of industry influence.
2. Generate mechanisms to avoid the participation of the TI or its representatives in the formulation of public policies related to tobacco, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.
3. Carry out educational and awareness campaigns through the Ministry of Education on the health risks associated with the consumption of tobacco and nicotine products.
4. Strengthen collaboration with other countries and international organizations to share best practices and experiences in combating TI interference. Coordination at the global level can strengthen individual efforts and build a common front against the TI.
5. Support strong anti-tobacco policies from civil society, health organizations, local communities and consumer advocacy groups. The greater the public support for these policies, the less influence the TI has.