

Finland



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

There is no evidence that the Finnish government accepts or endorses offers of assistance from the tobacco industry (TI) when setting or implementing tobacco and nicotine control policy. There is also no evidence that the government accepts or endorses policies or legislation drafted by, or in collaboration with, the TI. The government does not allow or invite the TI to sit on government multisectoral committees that set public health policy, nor does it nominate TI representatives or allies to participate in the official Finnish delegation to WHO FCTC COP sessions.

2. Industry CSR Activities

Government agencies and officials do not cooperate with the TI in matters related to public health policy and adhere to the principles of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. There is no information indicating that government agencies or officials in Finland have received corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributions, monetary or otherwise, from the TI or its affiliates.

3. Benefits to the Industry

There is no direct evidence of benefits provided to the TI, but standardized packaging regulations allowed a one-year transition period, and certain flavors for nicotine pouches were included. The sale of Swedish smokeless tobacco (snus) is banned in the EU but permitted in Sweden under an exemption, which affects Finland as a neighboring country. Snus has long been subject to a large passenger import quota, and nicotine pouches are now allowed a similarly high quota, making them more accessible.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

There is no evidence that Finnish ministers, the Prime Minister, or the President participate in TI events. The government does not solicit or endorse assistance from the TI and does not collaborate with it. However, Members of Parliament have participated in study trips to Switzerland funded by Philip Morris. While lobbying activities by the TI are known to occur, little information is recorded in the transparency register. The National Audit Office of Finland has launched an investigation into TI lobbying practices, noting that much of it remains concealed from the official register.

5. Transparency

The government does not systematically disclose meetings with the TI. The Act on the Openness of Government Activities guarantees citizens the right to request official documents, making it possible to obtain details through information requests. Given its monitoring role, the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira) must prepare minutes of all meetings with the TI. The Transparency of Lobbying Act, which came into force in 2024, requires actors seeking to influence Parliament or ministries to register their lobbying activities. This applies to the TI but is not limited to it. However, much TI lobbying has remained concealed from the register.



6. Conflict of Interest

The government does not prohibit contributions from the TI or entities working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns, although legislation imposes general rules and transparency requirements on such donations. The Audit Office has advised that guidelines should explicitly prohibit the acceptance of money or trips from external parties. No retired senior government officials have been identified as holding positions in the TI, nor have current government officials been found to hold such positions.

7. Preventive Measures

The government does not systematically disclose records of interactions with the TI and its representatives. The Act on the Openness of Government Activities guarantees citizens the right to request official documents, making it possible to obtain details about such meetings through information requests.

The Tobacco Act requires only the submission of sales volume data to Valvira. There is no program in place to consistently raise awareness within government departments on policies relating to Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. General anti-bribery rules prohibit officials from accepting contributions or gifts, but no policy specifically addresses contributions from the TI.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Incorporate the prevention of TI influence into the Tobacco Act by explicitly referencing Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, as previously recommended by the ministerial working group on Finnish tobacco and nicotine policy.
2. Ensure that all political decision-makers, advisors, and officials involved directly or indirectly with tobacco and nicotine control policies are fully aware of, committed to, and compliant with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, which Finland has ratified and which is legally binding.
3. Raise awareness across all government departments and agencies regarding the obligations under Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, supported by regular training programs.
4. Enforce sanctions for failure to report lobbying activities by the TI or its affiliates in the transparency register.
5. Tighten regulation of passenger import quotas for snus, tobacco, and nicotine products to prevent industry benefits and reduce the availability of these products to young people.