

Lebanon

Overall score:

75

I. Industry participation in policy development:

Lebanon faced high levels of industry interference and fared poorly in implementing Article 5.3 guidelines to protect its public health measures. The Lebanese government is not sensitive to the fact that there is a conflict of interest for the state-owned enterprise, Libanaise Des Tabacs Et Tombacs (Regie) or transnational tobacco companies to be involved in policy making. Propositions from the tobacco industry contrary to tobacco control are not questioned.

The government delegation to the COP or any of its related meetings does not include any representative from the tobacco industry.

II. Tobacco industry-related CSR activities: Both PMI and Regie hand out scholarships to children of tobacco farmers through CSR activities and government officials participate in these ceremonies. In one Regie-sponsored activity besides officials from Regie and the Syndicate of Lebanese Tobacco Growers, the ceremony was attended by several municipal chiefs and economic and social figures.

III. Benefits given to the tobacco industry: The tobacco industry sought endorsement from top leadership to manufacture electronic cigarettes in Lebanon. In November 2017, Regie signed an MOU with PMI to begin manufacturing PMI's cigarette brands in Lebanon. The agreement also includes manufacturing e-cigarettes in the future. Besides PMI, the other transnational tobacco companies, BAT, JTI and Imperial Brands also have business in Lebanon. Lebanon seems to be moving towards increasing tobacco business by increasing investment. High-ranking government officials were present when the agreement was signed, indicating their endorsement.

IV. Unnecessary interaction with the tobacco industry:

In Lebanon, top-level government officials attend tobacco-related functions organized by their state-owned tobacco enterprise, Regie. In October 2018, the Minister of Defense received Regie executives at his office where the Minister presented an honorary shield to Regie and their contribution. In turn, Regie presented the Minister with a photograph of tobacco plants.

V. Procedure for transparency measures: There is no procedure in place to ensure transparency when the government meets with the tobacco industry. There are no government rules for the disclosure or registration of tobacco industry entities.

VI. Avoiding conflicts of interest: Conflict of interest from retired senior government officials who joined tobacco companies has been a problem. The government does not prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry.

VII. Preventive measures: Lebanon does not have a plan for implementation of Article 5.3. There is no procedure in place to disclose government's interaction with the tobacco industry. The government has not adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials in their dealings with the tobacco industry.

While the tobacco industry is required to submit information on tobacco production and manufacture for tax purpose, there is no requirement for the industry to submit other information such as market share, marketing expenditures, lobbying, philanthropy, and others.

There is no publicly available information to show the government has a program or plan to consistently raise awareness on Article 5.3 Guidelines within its departments.



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Recommendations

1. Tobacco related CSR activities must be banned.
2. State owned enterprise, Regie, must be treated like any other tobacco company. To prevent the industry from having a direct role in tobacco control policymaking, a "firewall" between the industry and tobacco control policy must be established.
3. There must be a procedure in place to disclose the records of government interaction with the tobacco industry. A code of conduct should be adopted by the government to guide officials when dealing with the tobacco industry.
4. The tobacco industry should be required to submit information on tobacco business such as market share, marketing expenditures and philanthropy.