

Georgia

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Summary of Findings

1. Industry participation in policy development

The tobacco industry (TI) intensively participates in policy development processes. This business has strong support from the economic arm of the government and Parliament. Keen supporters of the TI include the Ministry of Economy and Office of Business Ombudsman of Georgia who promote the tobacco industry's position.

2. Industry CSR activities

The TI is not allowed to organize corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions or support any physical or judicial person. Georgia has no regulations regarding charity. This means that it is possible for the TI to make donations as long as there is no promotion of their company or their tobacco products. During COVID-19, all transnational tobacco corporations working in Georgia (British American Tobacco [BAT], Japan Tobacco International [JTI] and Philip Morris International [PMI]) donated to the special StopCov Fund at US \$30,000 each, and in the process promoted their business, ignoring the fact that it is responsible for the death of 11,400 Georgians every year.

3. Benefits to the industry

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development has a special state program called "Produce in Georgia" which has supported production of local tobacco since 2014.

4. Unnecessary interaction

Unnecessary interaction of the TI with governmental officials or Members of Parliament took place and they have direct and unlimited interactions and communications.

5. Transparency

No transparency exists in the relations between the TI and state institutions. A draft Decree on "Protecting the State Policy Related to Tobacco Control in Public Institutions and

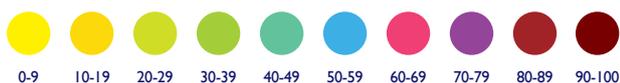
Establishing the Rule of Communication of State Servants with the Tobacco Industry" was prepared in June 2018. However, the draft still awaits the approval of the Georgian government. The reason for this delay is the TI's broad influence on the government.

6. Conflict of interest

A former Minister of Economy owns a local tobacco manufacturing company and influences the current government to create a profitable environment for his business.

7. Preventive measures

No preventive measures have been put in place. The government has not adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials that prescribes the standards when dealing with the TI.



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**A draft Decree on
“Protecting the State
Policy Related to
Tobacco Control in
Public Institutions”
prepared in 2018 is still
pending approval.**”

Recommendations

1. Adopt the draft Governmental Decree on “Protecting the State Policy Related to Tobacco Control in Public Institutions and Establishing the Rule of Communication of State Servants with the Tobacco Industry” as soon as possible.
2. Disallow participation of the tobacco industry in public health policy-setting and implementation.
3. Ban and de-normalize CSR and charitable activities from the tobacco industry.
4. Disclose all records of meetings with the tobacco industry and government officials.
5. Implement a code of conduct for public officials to guide them when dealing with the tobacco industry.