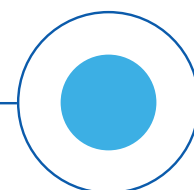


Israel



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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

During the reporting period, evidence showed the continued influence of the tobacco industry (TI) on Israel's financial and regulatory policies.

In legislation, as early as 2018, during Amendment No. 7 of the Prohibition of Advertising of Tobacco and Smoking Products Law, the TI successfully secured the removal of a section prohibiting the marketing of flavored products, claiming it was a "new topic." Since then, despite legislative attempts, the prohibition has been stalled.

In policy development, the TI has used public participation mechanisms extensively, allowing it to raise claims that delayed legislation. Philip Morris also attempted to advance a dedicated Israeli standard for heated tobacco products, which was blocked by the Ministry of Health.

2. Industry CSR Activities

No evidence was found of government acceptance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributions from the TI. However, Philip Morris has promoted itself as a responsible company committed to sustainability, emphasizing environmental achievements while ignoring the health and social harms caused by its products.

The company also advanced media initiatives highlighting environmental activity, attempting to obscure the gap between this green image and the health and social harms linked to its operations.

3. Benefits to the Industry

Enforcement and supervision gaps benefited the TI. The government has not fully implemented mechanisms under the Prohibition of Advertising and Restriction of Marketing of Tobacco and Smoking Products Law.

In addition, although the Finance Committee required a work plan for enforcement of tax collection on electronic cigarettes by May 2024, no such plan has been submitted or implemented. These delays allowed enforcement gaps to persist, benefiting the TI.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

Reports indicate cooperation between the TI, the Israeli Federation for Intellectual Property, and government enforcement agencies including the Tax Authority and Israel Police. Beyond financing training, evidence showed Federation supervisors participating in enforcement actions.

Israel signed the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products in December 2013 but has not ratified it.

5. Transparency

Since 2016, the Minister of Health's Report on Smoking in Israel has included a chapter on meetings with TI companies. However, these reports cover meetings with Ministry of Health representatives only, excluding other ministries and government officials.

Mandatory lobbyist registration applies only to activities within the Knesset building. It does not cover Ministers, other public officials, or activities outside the Knesset.



6. Conflict of Interest

The Political Parties Financing Law prohibits contributions from corporations in general but does not specifically mention the TI. There is no regulated registry of TI entities or their representatives, which makes it difficult to monitor connections and influence in government, regulation, and politics.

No public cases were identified of former senior officials joining the TI after retirement, nor of current officials or their relatives being employed by the TI.

7. Preventive Measures

The government has no procedure for disclosing interactions with the TI. The Ministry of Health publishes an annual list of meetings with TI representatives, but the information is partial, limited to one ministry, and lacks minutes or supporting documentation.

There is no comprehensive government policy or code of conduct for officials on engaging with the TI. Companies are not required to systematically report on production, marketing, or political activities, and even existing requirements, such as reporting on advertising, are poorly implemented.

The government has no dedicated policy for implementing Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, and the Knesset's Rules of Procedure do not include explicit restrictions on receiving assistance from the TI.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a regulated registry of TI entities and their representatives.
2. Expand mandatory reporting and transparency of meetings with TI representatives.
3. Update the Rules of Ethics and implement cooling-off periods.
4. Formulate a government plan to implement Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, including guidance for public officials to limit interactions with the TI to when strictly necessary.
5. Develop mechanisms and sanctions against misleading information spread by the TI.