en | fr

Press release | 24.02.2016

# Public health

## Grossly inappropriate EU tobacco agreement must be consigned to history

The European Commission today released its long awaited assessment of an agreement between tobacco companies and the EU. With the PMI agreement set to expire this year (1), the assessment is part of Commission deliberations on whether to renew the agreement before July. The Greens argue that the agreement is obsolete, with its main objectives now covered by EU law and an international protocol, and that the renewal of a special agreement with the tobacco industry would be inappropriate in the context of efforts to address the public health impact of tobacco. Commenting on the situation and ahead of a crucial debate and vote in the European Parliament (2), Green MEP and transparency spokesperson **Bart Staes** said:

*"The smoke and mirrors surrounding this assessment of the PMI agreement and the exploratory meetings already underway on the renewal of the agreement have added fuel to pre-existing concerns. Regardless of how the Commission is trying to spin it in its assessment, there are major doubts about the effectiveness of the agreement in reducing the illicit trade in tobacco products and ensuring exchequers are not being deprived of revenue. The Commission is overstating the agreement's role in the pre-existing downward trend of counterfeit cigarettes. Beyond this, the agreement is simply superfluous, having been superseded by provisions in the EU's tobacco products directive and the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The convention itself explicitly states that such agreements with the tobacco industry are in conflict with the aims of the convention and threaten progress in tobacco control (3).*

*"It would be grossly inappropriate to conclude a parallel new bilateral agreement with the industry, even more so in a situation when one of the main firms (Philip Morris) is taking a legal challenge against the EU legislation agreed in 2014. Fully implementing and upholding the provisions of this legal framework should be the priority of the Commission and the fundamental guiding principle should be to protect public health and tackle the major health implications of tobacco. Renewing this agreement with PMI would be good PR for that company but would undermine the credibility of the EU.*

*"It may be a new EU Commission but sadly the suspect approach to dealing with the tobacco industry seems to have remained the same; it seems no lessons have been learned from the shameful lobbying around the EU tobacco products directive and the Dalli affair. There should be absolute transparency regarding any dealings with the tobacco industry, as stipulated under the WHO protocol and, as the European Ombudsman has made clear, the Commission is still failing to deliver this. The Commission needs to stop kowtowing to the industry and abandon its poacher-turned-gamekeeper approach to regulating the sector."*

(1) The Philip Morris International agreement was first signed in 2004 and extended to include other tobacco firms following legal action brought against them for smuggling and money laundering. Ostensibly aimed at tackling the illicit trade in tobacco, it has been superseded by provisions in the EU's tobacco products directive and the WHO's international Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. In spite of this, and the fact that Philip Morris has launched a legal challenge of the EU tobacco directive, the Commission has engaged in exploratory meetings with a view to considering whether or not to renew the agreement, when it expires this summer. The assessment of this agreement, which was supposed to be concluded before, was released to MEPs today.

(2) The European Parliament is set to debate the agreement tomorrow and will adopt a resolution outlining its position next month.

(3) See the explanatory document on the WHO FCTC [http://www.who.int/fctc/protocol/faq/en/](http://www.who.int/fctc/protocol/faq/en/)

Press release

https://www.greens-efa.eu/de/artikel/press/vote-on-eus-fiscal-rules-ignores-scars-of-financial-crisis-will-lead-to-more-austerity

[MEPs adopt Ecodesign and Right to Repair Regulations]

23.04.2024

Press release

[EUCO: EU Strategic Agenda needs to focus on climate ch…]

17.04.2024

Press release

https://www.pexels.com/search/gas%20burning/

[MEPs set to approve agreement on reducing methane emis…]

09.04.2024

**Responsible MEPs**

Bart Staes

Member

**Please share**

- E-Mail