

Press release – September 8, 2021

## **Tobacco Industry Interference with German Government Health and civil society organizations demand transparency**

*Despite international obligations, the German government is taking insufficient measures against the influence of the tobacco industry on political decisions. This is revealed by a new tobacco industry interference index presented by the Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) and supported by the German Cancer Research Center, Unfairtobacco and eleven other organizations.*

Every year, 127,000 people in Germany die as a result of smoking. Nevertheless, there is currently no binding strategy to reduce tobacco consumption and the regulation of the tobacco industry is rather industry-friendly compared to other countries. This is also due to the fact that tobacco companies continue to be granted many opportunities for influence in politics, as the "Tobacco Industry Interference Index Germany 2021" highlights. For example, the taxes on cigarettes and fine-cut, which were newly set in June 2021, are too low from a health policy point of view. In the run-up, there were numerous consultations with the tobacco industry that suggest influence on the law, as the tobacco lobby index and a recent report in the news magazine [Der Spiegel](#) reveal.

The Ministry of Finance refuses to provide information on the content of the talks: "The Ministry rejected our freedom of information request with a five-page justification and demanded the maximum possible fee of 500 euros. It appears as if the ministry has something to hide and wants to discourage further inquiries," comments Laura Graen, GGTC consultant and author of the tobacco lobby index.

The index is part of an international lobby ranking compiled by GGTC. It is based on guidelines of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which Germany has also ratified.

"The Tobacco Industry Interference Index shows that policy decisions must be effectively protected from being influenced by manufacturers of tobacco and related products and their organizations. This is also a demand of the [Strategy for a Tobacco-Free Germany 2040](#) published in spring 2021 by the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum) and over 50 other organizations as a call to policy-makers. We expect the new federal government to take appropriate measures after the upcoming September election," says Katrin Schaller from the German Cancer Research Center.

The signatory organizations of the Tobacco Industry Interference Index demand, among other things, that interactions between political decision-makers and the tobacco industry are limited to only when strictly necessary. Planned meeting dates should be published in advance and minutes of meetings should be disclosed. In addition, tobacco industry

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donations and sponsorship to parties and public institutions are to be banned.

Through corporate social responsibility projects, the tobacco industry also tries to present itself as a legitimate social actor to enhance its reputation and its possibilities of influencing politics. "In the run-up to the Bundestag elections, Philip Morris International is awarding prizes in its campaign #powerfordemocracy to projects that are committed to democracy. Paradoxically, PMI is internationally well known for challenging democratically passed health protection laws in court. Corporate social responsibility projects of the tobacco industry should be prohibited," said Sonja von Eichborn of Unfairtobacco.

#### Contacts:

Laura Graen, consultant of the Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC)  
+49 157 725 922 47 | [graen@lauragraen.de](mailto:graen@lauragraen.de)

Dr. Katrin Schaller, Interim Head of the Cancer Prevention Unit at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ)  
+49 6221 423 016 | [k.schaller@dkfz.de](mailto:k.schaller@dkfz.de)

Sonja von Eichborn, Project Manager Unfairtobacco  
+49 1511 5590 191 | [eichborn@unfairtobacco.org](mailto:eichborn@unfairtobacco.org)

#### The Tobacco Industry Interference Index Germany 2021 is endorsed by:

German Medical Action Group Smoking or Health (ÄARG)  
German NCD Alliance (DANK)  
German Academy for Child and Adolescent Medicine (DAKJ)  
German Cancer Aid  
German Respiratory Society (DGP)  
German Cancer Research Centre (DKFZ)  
German Network of Tobacco Free Hospitals and Healthcare Services (DNRFK)  
Women Against Tobacco (FACT)  
Friedensband  
Health Care Plus UG  
Institute for Therapy and Health Research (IFT-Nord)  
Unfairtobacco  
Vivantes Hospital Group

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**The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) is a partner of STOP.** STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products) is a global tobacco industry watchdog whose mission is to expose the tobacco industry strategies and tactics that undermine public health. STOP is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and comprised of a partnership between The [Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath](#), [The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control \(GGTC\)](#), the [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease \(The Union\)](#) and [Vital Strategies](#). For more information, visit [exposetobacco.org](http://exposetobacco.org).

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