



## Japan Society for Tobacco Control

日本禁煙学会

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**To**

Prime Minister Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

[bimer@basbakanlik.gov.tr](mailto:bimer@basbakanlik.gov.tr)

and Minister Mr Ali Babacan

[ozelkalem@basbakanlik.gov.tr](mailto:ozelkalem@basbakanlik.gov.tr)

**Subject: STOP meeting with JT**

Dear Prime Minister Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Minister Mr Ali Babacan

It has come to the attention of the global public health community that in Turkey a security company called Esfor ([www.esfor.com.tr](http://www.esfor.com.tr)) has written to TAPDK ( Tobacco and Alcohol Regulatory Authority) for support in their seminars they are organizing for state officials on behalf of Japan Tobacco (JT).

In other words: JT will have meetings with governmental civil workers in the cities below at the given times.

23 May İstanbul

24 May Trabzon

25 May Ankara

26 May Gaziantep

27 May Mersin.

Each seminar will be between 10:00-14:00 hrs. The corporate affairs chair of JT, the brand manager of Middle East- Near East , R&D manager of JT will be attending these seminars.

**We call on you to stop meeting with JT and to urge all invited government officials not to attend these seminars** as they violate Turkey's obligations under Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework

Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) that states Parties shall protect their public health policies "from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry." The guidelines for Article 5.3 were completed and unanimously adopted at the 3rd Conference of Parties in November 2008 (see [http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article\\_5\\_3/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3/en/index.html)).

These guidelines recognize that "[t]here is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests." These guidelines also reinforce the preamble to the FCTC which states that Parties "need to be alert to any efforts by the tobacco industry to undermine or subvert tobacco control efforts and the need to be informed of activities of the tobacco industry that have a negative impact on tobacco control efforts." Government officials involved with tobacco control policies should not engage in dialogue with the tobacco industry and its affiliates.

JT is using these meetings to undermine Turkey's progress on implementing effective tobacco control measures, as required by the FCTC. Such meetings may also serve to improve the corporation's image and enhance its credibility, gather information about government and NGO strategies, and to reframe the debate around issues of "rights" and participation, rather than public health.

The tobacco industry, however, is not a stakeholder when it comes to public health, because of its fundamental conflict of interest with public health goals. However, tobacco corporations and their agents are increasingly seeking to meet with government officials and civil society leaders. We encourage Turkey's government officials to interact with the tobacco industry only to the extent strictly necessary to regulate the tobacco industry and tobacco products effectively.

If government interaction with the tobacco industry is legally required or otherwise necessary for effective regulation, it must be transparent. Transparency measures include public hearings, advance public notice of meetings, civil society access to meetings, and public availability of records and interactions.

However, in this case, such meetings do not seem to be legally required nor necessary for effective regulation and violate the obligations of international agreements under the FCTC and its Article 5.3 guidelines.

We ask the Ministry of Health in Turkey to safeguard public health policy, as well as the process to effectively implement FCTC lifesaving measures, and take all necessary actions to exclude the tobacco industry and those with commercial and other vested interests in the tobacco industry, from participation on any current and future meeting. In accordance with international commitments, the FCTC and the

Article 5.3 Guidelines, such an action would ensure the integrity and impact of regional and national strategies to save millions of lives.

We join our health advocates around the world in calling on your government to exclude JT from any possible meetings with public officials, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

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Japan Society for Tobacco Control  
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Manabu Sakuta, MD

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