TOBACCO INDUSTRY EFFORTS TO ERODE TOBACCO ADVERTISING CONTROLS IN HUNGARY

Szilágyi T.[1], Chapman S.[2]
[1]Rapanui Ltd, Hungary
[2]School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Australia

SUMMARY

Objective: To review strategies of transnational tobacco companies (TTCs) at creating a favourable advertising environment for their products in Hungary, with special regard to efforts resulting in the liberalisation of tobacco advertising in 1997.

Method: Analysis of internal tobacco industry documents relevant to Hungary available on the World Wide Web. Transcripts of speeches of members of the Parliament during the debate of the 1997 advertising act were also reviewed.

Conclusions: The tobacco companies not only entered the Hungarian market by early participation in the privatisation of the former state tobacco monopoly, but also imported their sophisticated marketing experiences. Evasion and violation of rules in force, creation of new partnerships, establishment and use of front groups, finding effective ways for influencing decision makers were all parts of a well orchestrated industry effort to avoid a strict marketing regulation for tobacco products.

Key words: TTCs, internal tobacco industry documents, Hungary, tobacco advertising and marketing.

Address for correspondence: T. Szilágyi, 65 Áfonya st, H-2030 Érd, Hungary. E-mail: h21hf@axelero.hu

INTRODUCTION

The US Master Settlement Agreement (1) required United States based TTCs to make an estimated 40 million pages of their formerly private internal documents available on the internet. Representing an unknown cross section of all internal industry documents, those now available provide an incomplete keyhole view of TTCs' tactics and strategies.

Once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary (population 10 million) has always distinguished itself as a progressive, liberal and relatively wealthy state among Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Since the fall of the communist regime, Hungary has remained one of the most prosperous states in the region. But infamously, the country ranks eights in the world on adult per capita consumption of cigarettes (2). Also, Hungary ranks first in the world regarding morbidity from lung and oral cancers (3).

Foreign owned tobacco companies have shown an interest in the market potential of Hungary since the middle of 1960s. Factories of the formerly state-owned Hungarian tobacco monopoly were among the first properties to be privatised in 1991-92 after the fall of communism (4). To achieve early returns for their investments TTCs needed to ensure that they are allowed to market their products. On entering the Hungarian market the TTCs found a total ban on tobacco advertising in force. These advertising regulations, imposed in 1972 and 1978, respectively, were repealed in 1997 to permit tobacco advertising in print media, cinemas and theatres, outdoor posters and billboards and at the point of sale, along with sponsorship of a variety of events. The amendment of the 1997 advertising law, adopted by the Hungarian Parliament on 19 December 2000 reinstated a ban on direct and indirect tobacco advertising, but still allowed point-of-sale advertising and sponsorship of events by tobacco companies.

This paper reviews the efforts of tobacco companies to liberalise tobacco advertising and create a more favourable advertising environment of their products in Hungary.

SOURCES OF DOCUMENTS

The documents cited in this paper were located from the company sites of Philip Morris (PM, http://www.pmdocs.com), British American Tobacco (BAT, http://www.cctc.ca, http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/guildford_search.cgi) and the Council for Tobacco Research, USA (http://www.ctr-usa.org/ctr). Document searches were undertaken between 26 July 2001 and 15 February 2002. Searching methods have been described in detail elsewhere (4, 5). The majority of analysed documents refer to activities of PM. Though BAT is the market leader in Hungary, only a small fraction of its internal documents stored in the Guildford (UK) depository, were available on the internet and thus, searchable.

RESULTS

As was the case in the majority of former communist markets (6), at the time of the fall of the Berlin wall all forms of direct and indirect tobacco advertising were banned in Hungary. The

10/1977. (V.14.) Decree of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the 1978/I Act on Internal Trade (§34) only allowed point of sale (POS) advertising, including placement of advertisements in shop windows (7). The TTCs found that this severely hampered their ability to communicate with their consumers and future customers.

The Hungarian Tobacco Institution, a state-owned research institute located in the town of Debrecen in east-Hungary, stated in 1988 that the country's cigarette market was almost saturated (8). But even in these condition TTCs were capable to found new groups to target. Both the content of cigarette advertisements (heavily promoted light cigarettes, with women being prominent) and channels used for their delivery (women's magazines and free magazines reaching teenagers) indicate that women and youth, with still low smoking prevalence compared to adult men, led the companies' priority list of whom to target with their marketing activities.

Both PM *("... our ability to use image advertising is seriously restricted"* (9) and *"even point-of-sale promotions are difficult"* (10)) and BAT documents discuss the urgent need for the *"removal of existing harsh advertising restrictions"* (11). PM's policy for the new markets of central and eastern Europe (CEE) was that *"... existing legislation governing advertising needs to be adapted to the realities of a free-market economy"* (12). In Hungary, PM's plan was *"to amend obsolete tobacco advertising legislation"* through *"direct lobbying and action with third party allies"* (13).

Further, PM's business philosophy calls for protecting its legitimate interests *"against discriminatory or unfair legislation and practices"*, an objective *"which would be rigorously pursued in Hungary"*. (14) Also, one of the main regional strategies of PM in 1993-95 was to *"fight advertising restrictions/bans in all instances"* in all countries of the EEMA [Eastern Europe, Middle East, Asia] (15). PM considered the Hungarian tobacco industry *"a significant and steady source of government tax revenue if healthy and prosperous* [emphasis added]*"* (14) and claimed that the freedom to advertise was essential for the continuous influx of capital to be used for the modernisation of the Hungarian tobacco industry:

"A critical factor for the successful implementation of the Philip Morris proposal to modernise the Hungarian tobacco industry is the complete freedom of manufacturers to advertise their products... consumers must be provided with the essential characteristics of the product entries in an impactful way [emphasis added]*."* (14)

A 1987 BAT document claims that *"advertising is the lifeblood of successful cigarette marketing"* (16). Another strategic paper of BAT, speaking about the company's new markets, stated that brands must be built as quickly as possible by exploiting "crafted, modern advertising campaigns" as early returns in investments were at stake (17).

Law Violation as a Means Promoting Liberalisation of Advertising

Both BAT and PM have long claimed that they follow responsible marketing practices (18, 19). An 1987 BAT memo, re-stating the official policy of the company, concluded that *"BAT companies should operate and should be seen to operate within the law"*. Its author also warned that *"conducting a promotion which infringes the law can have consequences which are both extremely expensive and embarrassing"* (20). PM also accepted that *"all advertising and promotional activities [must] comply with local laws"* (21). In a Q&A compilation, along with a comment on the company's illegal marketing practices in Hungary, the author stated that the company conducted its business activities *"in strict compliance with all the laws and regulations"* (12). Michael Miles, then Chairman of the Board and chief executive officer of PM Companies Inc. also reassured stockholders at the 1992 annual meeting that *"the company not only complies with the letter of the law but ...maintains the highest standards of ethical and moral conduct."* (22).

Hungary's experience with TTCs in the early 1990s was somewhat different than this rhetoric suggests. In 1992-93 both PM and BAT violated the country's advertising rules. In spite of a ban on product sampling, in November 1992 BAT was found to be mailing packs of its Sopianae cigarette brand to children. PM was concerned about the incident, fearing it would negatively impact its own lobbying efforts targeted at removing the ban:

"Efforts to reach a compromise between the industry and the government on cigarette advertising were seriously damaged this week by BAT's direct mail campaign for its Sophiane [sic! correctly: Sopiane] *brand. Sample packs were distributed through the mail* [bold in original] *and Hungarian radio stated that these packs had been sent directly to children. BAT acknowledged this, blaming "administrative mistakes". This campaign has clearly damaged industry credibility and may make further negotiations with the government impossible"* (23).

In a marketing plan dated 11 November 1992 PM stressed that the regulations in force created a competitive disadvantage for tobacco companies, but also noted that *"PM obey and competition disobey the law"*. However, a report dated some weeks later confessed that PM followed suit in overlooking the law: *"Government authorities are investigating two advertising campaigns run by PM for its Marlboro and Helikon cigarette brands..."* (23).

The company considered the massive billboard and magazine advertising campaign it conducted nothing more than *"a very liberal approach in interpreting the law"* (24). PM also decided to seek *"immediate clarification on what kind of activities are acceptable by the consumer protection and competition office"* (25).

PM's illegal practice resulted in a $200,000 fine despite noting earlier that *"... there were no apparent problems with the authorities..."* (24). The Economic Competition Office (ECO)* has launched legal action against PM, its advertising agency, Leo Burnett Co, and the Hungarian media which published illegal tobacco advertisements:

"Court hearings will commence next week in the Hungarian Economic Council's case against Philip Morris Cos. on charges of illegal print and outdoor advertising. Hungarian media and Leo Burnett Co. have also been charged with violating the country's ban on ads..." (26).

*The ECO - in other documents referred to as Hungarian Economic Council, Hungarian Competition Bureau or competition office – is a government-based agency, which oversees the implementation of and enforces the country's competition law.

Despite the court cases PM seemed to be prepared not only for continuing to act illegally, but it also took action to enter into dialogue with the plaintiff of its court case. PM was seeking to *"define and improve working relationship with Economic Competition Office to establish basis for marketing opportunities"* (15).

According to a 1993 marketing plan, the company intended to spend $100,000 for banned promotional activities exploiting the Hungarian Formula-1 race, including $45,000 for 200 billboard advertisements, $30,000 for flags to be displayed on bridges and streets, and $25,000 for TV commercials (24). To circumvent the rules, PM also intended to *"develop sponsor based marketing programs"* (25). All these illegal marketing practices largely contributed to a fourfold increase of the overall marketing spending of TTCs between 1994 and 1997, the last four years before the liberalisation of tobacco advertising (27).

The industry's practice, along with the resulting court cases and media coverage of these developments also contributed to the creation of a controversy around the old but, from a tobacco control point-of-view, advanced advertising regulation. The ECO, also expressing control over competition issues involved with economic advertising activities, was growing impatient with inquiries on the violation of these regulations and with the management of consequent court cases, and became interested in finding a solution to prevent further episodes. At a press conference its Chairman stated that *"...the present lack of an Advertising Law in one element which poses a problem."* He *"criticized the situation which has led to unregulated tobacco products advertising in the country, but announced that his office will not begin new investigations into supposedly illegal tobacco advertisements until the Supreme Court has ruled on the issue"* (28).

The ECO, by vocally publicising its position on the continuing willingness of the TTCs to break the law, created pressure on government for the adoption of a new advertising law. In these circumstances the TTCs practice of evading the advertising rules had not only proved to be a means for increasing sales by also reaching smoking and non-smoking consumers alike (29), but also a clever tactic aimed at repealing the country's strict rules on the marketing of tobacco products. A 1995 inquiry of the Consumer Protection Directorate, another government-based agency controlled by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, found that cigarette producers violated tobacco advertising bans in almost all media. The fines, determined decades earlier when the Hungarian currency was much stronger, failed to act as a deterrent and to wealthy tobacco multinationals could have been considered simply a component of the costs of doing business (30).

Industry Voluntary Code versus Strict Marketing Restrictions

The way TTCs managed to influence the development of the new Hungarian advertising regulation can be traced by reviewing the internal documents.

As early as 1992 PM promoted the establishment of a working group aimed at studying *"the issues involved in liberalising the current ad ban"* with representatives of the industry, ministries, and the Hungarian association of cigarette producers (25). In spite of the repeated violation of advertising rules by TTCs – such as with BAT addressing direct mails to children -, high-level government officials decided to commence negotiations with the industry:

"Despite the damage done by the BAT's direct main campaign… Deputy Secretary of State Schagrin agreed to go ahead with a December 3rd [1992] meeting to discuss a constructive solution to the problems with interpretation of existing legislation on tobacco advertising" (23).

The law governing the advertising ban was administered by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) with the Health Ministry – always among the weakest portfolios of successive Hungarian governments – also invited to participate in discussions in late 1992. TTCs sought urgent liberalisation of advertising rules and offered a voluntary marketing code; they knew that *"if done honestly and with the concurrence of government authorities – and in advance of restrictive government proposals – industry codes can be accepted instead of legislation"* (31). The typical blueprint for industry codes included a plethora of loose, ambiguous and subjective code clauses; a judiciary or code monitoring system comprised of tobacco, advertising and media industry representatives who all stood to gain from the widest possible interpretations of code guidelines; and enforcement of breaches "after the horse had bolted", when advertising campaigns had often run their course. Several of these elements characterised the Hungarian system that was to be introduced (14).

PM engaged in various initiatives to keep the issue on the agenda. These included a press conference for the delivery of the industry's position on the occasion of the August 1993 Hungarian F1 Grand Prix, mobilisation of allies, and heavy lobbying for the establishment of an industry-government working group as a tool for persuading bureaucrats in key positions. PM's objective was to have government adopt new and liberal legislation by the end of 1994 (24). The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) supported PM's effort in using the working group as a forum *"to negotiate the development of a decree which will serve as a more practical interpretation of the Trade Law* [one of the regulations on tobacco advertising]*"*. Members of the working group included the representatives of the Hungarian TTCs, but also delegates of the alcohol industry. The latter was another partner interested in the amendment of the 1978 decree since alcohol advertising was also banned at that time (32).

In spite of the influential supporters and government portfolios, in late 1993 PM still struggled to gain support from the MTI for more liberal regulation (33). The report of an October 1993 meeting between PM and the industry and trade minister indicates the minister still refused to lift the advertising ban:

"PM presented all relevant industry arguments, highlighted the possible consequences of a ban, and emphasized that a legal solution for solving problems under the current law is possible. The Minister expressed his serious reservations to any such liberalization prior to parliamentary review of the law. He further stated his Ministry would propose submission of the law proposal to Parliament in two versions: the first a total ban, reaffirming the current practice, and a second, more liberal version. He proposed a follow-up meeting in two weeks" (33).

An early 1994 Reuters report also illustrated a stiffening of the government's position in the advertising issue:

"The Hungarian government has reportedly announced that it is to tighten the application of laws on advertising as soon as possible, with special attention given to the ban on advertising alcohol and tobacco products. A news report claims that the ban is being ignored by both manufacturers and distributors. While

health organizations insist that the ban should be applied, the newly-privatized manufacturers are said to argue that in view of the money they must pay in excise duties, they should be allowed to inform customers of new products" (34).

With the approach of the new parliamentary elections in May 1994, the lack of success of their earlier efforts may have stimulated the TTCs to change tactics. These included both the intensification of co-ordinated efforts for the preparation and adoption of an industry voluntary code on marketing practices and the interference with the debate of the pending tobacco advertising rules in parliamentary committees and within the parliament. Minutes of the parliamentary debate of the advertising bill provide evidence for both attempts.

The May 1994 parliamentary elections established a new socialist-free democrat government. PM was concerned about this political change, since the parties forming the new government had called for more emphasis on disease prevention, including tobacco control. Together with the growing anti-smoking sentiment in the country, PM believed the new developments *"would damage ability of the company in all business area to represent and defend company interests"* (35). PM feared that *"tough anti-smoking policy having impact on legislation relating to marketing, tax and customs, and products"* would be adopted by the new government (35).

Meanwhile, the Hungarian Association of Cigarette Manufacturers (HACM), soon after its establishment by TTCs in 1994, took up the leadership in orchestrating the development of a voluntary code on advertising. The then operating Hungarian TTCs (PM, BAT, Reemtsma and R.J. Reynolds) put together a more detailed *"industry proposal for modernisation of the regulatory environment regarding the marketing of tobacco products"*, in an attempt to *"reopen discussions with the government"*. The voluntary code, *"proposed and elaborated by PM"*, was integral part of this document (36).

The document package was accepted and signed by representatives of TTCs on 27 October 1994. The MTI was chosen as the *"initial avenue"* for lobbying since *"their legal department drafted the versions A and B of the former law proposal"*. In addition, Andreas Gembler of PM Europe had already lubricated the process by discussing the issue with László Pál, then trade minister during the Hungarian Grand Prix (37). The HACM also engaged itself in a lobbying tour promoting a weak law, which allowed enough room for industry self-regulation:

"The Hungarian Association of Cigarette Manufacturers (HACM) gave a presentation on the economic impact of the tobacco industry in Hungary and presented the HACM position on tobacco advertising to representatives of the legal sections on the Ministries of Industry & Trade, Labour, Finance, Culture & Education, and Health. The meeting was successful and will foster further dialogue. In particular, the representative of the Ministry of Health called for a compromise on the two versions of the tobacco advertising law draft, an industry voluntary code and an enforceable regulatory regime on advertising" (38).

In December 1995 the MTI finally released the provisional text of the new advertising bill. PM was informed about its content in advance by a source from the ministry (39). The very liberal version "A" would ban cigarette advertising in the print media aimed at children. The stricter version "B" *"would allow outdoor* [advertising], *advertising only in the adult press, at point-of-sale, and at international sporting events."* Both versions included a ban of tobacco advertising on TV and radio, in line with the European Union directive (39).

However, a change at the leadership of the ministry resulted in further delay in the submission of the advertising bill. Minutes of the 19 June 1997 parliamentary session indicate that the new leadership of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MTIT, the successor of the former MTI), led by Szabolcs Fazekas was a more tobacco industry-friendly then the previous one (30). The advertising bill submitted to the parliament by the MTIT's staff in February 1997 (40) had no trace of earlier plans A or B. Instead, there was only one option – the liberalisation of tobacco marketing – with only some very limited restrictions in the case of printed materials primarily aimed at children and youth and billboards in the immediate vicinity of schools. Overall, the bill relied on self regulation of the tobacco industry. The draft bill was prepared with the involvement of the advertising agencies, over the head of the public health community, with the committee on health and social affairs of the parliament receiving the text of the bill after the parliamentary debate of the bill has already been started (41).

In the preamble to the bill, among the factors motivating the need for a new and comprehensive advertising regulation, authors claimed that almost all articles of the previous tobacco advertising regulations had been violated by tobacco companies. It also stressed that the outcome of the legal actions against the culprits was still unclear since their appeals resulted in protracted suits which were still running (40). Also, transcripts of the speeches given during the parliamentary debate of the bill indicate that the provisions on tobacco advertising were the hottest issues among those covered by the new pending regulation. The most vocal supporters of a weak tobacco advertising regulation belonged to both the bigger governing party of socialists and to economic and financial committees of the Hungarian parliament. While a number of MPs submitted amendments calling for more restrictions on tobacco advertising (especially for a ban of advertising in public places), they were all defeated.

There was further evidence of the weakness of the portfolios committed to the health of the public. In the 1031/96 Decree of the Government dated 13 April 1996, the Government self--imposed the requirement that another bill protecting the rights of non-smokers be debated together with the advertising bill (41). Self-requesting this non-smokers rights' bill implied that the Government intended to pass an advertising law with weak provisions regarding regulation on tobacco marketing, and to satiate the Hungarian anti-smoking movement by offering them legal provisions related to other aspects of tobacco. But later the Government, led by chain-smoker prime minister Gyula Horn, simply neglected its own pledge and did not insist on the passage of the non-smokers rights' bill. An issue of The (UK) Guardian claimed that *"the tobacco lobby has acquired strong influence in the Hungarian Parliament"*, and also quoted Gábor Rácz, PR director of BAT Hungary discussing *"the peculiar interest-seeking relationship between members of the Parliament and the company"* (42). Eventually, the law was adopted by the parliament on 24 June 1997, giving green light to tobacco advertisements in outdoor posters and in the print media.

Tobacco Industry Partners in Lobbying

According to a 1993 BAT corporate affairs review, lobbying to *"limit* [the] *spread of restrictions"* and formation of allies' groups were considered key strategies in preventing marketing restrictions. (43) In addition, other initiatives such as building *"networks of friends and influential contacts"* and increasing *"investments for future influence"* within the government, politics and the media were also favoured by BAT (44). PM also stressed the importance of creating strategic alliances, especially with the advertising industry, which becomes financially dependent of TTCs in countries where advertising is not forbidden:

"Continue to identify and work with opinion leaders, as well as the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Advertising Association and their local chapters to fight legislative attempts to prevent tobacco products from being consumed by, or marketed to informed adults, and to offer viable alternatives through voluntary restraints and common courtesy" (45).

At a July 1991 BAT meeting dedicated to issues of marketing freedoms in new eastern European markets, preparation for the formation of national manufacturers' associations was considered a top priority, since the company considered NMA's as becoming mouthpieces for the presentation of industry views. Participants agreed that *"Poland should be the first priority in terms of country activity because of pending legislation there, followed by Hungary"* (11).

Based on the impact of its efforts, the front group of the Hungarian TTCs, the HACM could be considered one of the most active and powerful lobby groups in Hungary. This umbrella organisation was established in September 1994* to represent the common interests of the TTCs, excluding those directly related to the functioning of particular companies. It came into existence just in time to co-ordinate the industry's lobbying activities around the development and adoption of the new advertising law (1994-97). Its office is located in the building of the MoA opposite the Hungarian Parliament. As well as direct lobbying of ministry officials, MPs and parliamentary committees (41, 46), it also communicates industry positions in the news media. It commissions studies (47) and economic analyses (48) to support industry views and actively promotes these among key decision makers. It organises media campaigns aimed at accommodating smokers and maintaining the social acceptance of smoking. HACM's first president was Mark Anthony Jennings of BAT Hungary; since November 1999 András Patai, professor of economics, serves as the president of the organisation. Patai is also member of the board of presidents of the Hungarian Advertising Association (49).

The Self Regulatory Advertising Board (SRAB), ostensibly established to protect the public from deceptive advertising, seemed to be the most faithful supporter of the TTCs. The organisation, established on March 1996, just a few months before the launching of the parliamentary debate of the advertising bill, is a vocal supporter of self-regulation, claiming that it provides more effective and flexible solutions to the regulation of the advertising industry itself and to the control of conflicts between the industry and the public. Both BAT and PM were founding members of the organisation, along with advertising agencies with close links to tobacco companies. Moreover, both BAT and PM have had their representatives elected members of SRAB's governing bodies (49).

During the parliamentary debate of the 1997 advertising law, SRAB orchestrated the lobbying efforts of Hungarian advertising agencies towards a weak tobacco marketing regulation by participating in meetings of various parliamentary committees and calling for as much industry self-regulation as achievable. Ferenc Herbert, MP of the socialist party, warned SRAB from putting the economic interests of TTCs higher then the interests of the public.

"Respected advertising professionals! Non-smokers are consumers too, even if not of tobacco products'. Protecting their health and physical integrity is in our interest, since this enables them to use hundreds and thousands of other goods and services transmitted by high quality advertisements for a long time", he said in the Parliament in March 1997 (41).

CONCLUSIONS

Formerly private internal documents indicate that TTCs were engaged from the very beginning of their entry into the Hungarian market in actions to develop a supportive legislative and regulatory background on marketing of their products primarily aimed at ensuring early return of their investments. These included both practices which took advantage of the loopholes of the existing regulations, violations of the law and co-ordinated efforts to promote the need for liberalisation of the former advertising ban and instead a voluntary code on responsible tobacco marketing.

To achieve this, the TTCs created new partnerships with other parties interested in the amendment of the law banning tobacco advertising (especially advertising agencies, profiting from the tobacco advertising money and the alcohol industry, which could also be endangered by efforts to limit advertising of alcoholic beverages). These partners were willing to call for an unlimited freedom of commercial speech, with no regard to the interests of public health.

Even amid the favourable conditions for repealing so-called anti-competitive marketing laws, as well as sustained lobbying pressure by TTCs more than five years were necessary before the strict Hungarian tobacco advertising regulations were finally removed in June 1997. While anti-smoking activists have also put forward their arguments by working with key decision makers, the delayed amendment of the communist-time advertising act was primarily due to administrative reasons (high volume of new legislation has to be produced after ther transition to the market economy) and also to those ministers of economic affairs who opposed the instant and unconditioned removal of the tobacco advertising ban (50).

The Hungarian experience indicates that the perseverance and co-ordinated efforts of tobacco companies could eventually bear fruit. Awareness of TTCs' efforts in situations similar to that of

*Foundation documents of relevant industry "front" groups (National Association of Cigarette Manufacturers, Smoulders' Association and Self-regulatory Advertising Board), available in Hungarian only are accessible for those interested applying in person, in the NGO Office of the Ministry of Justice. Tibor Szilágyi reviewed these on 30–31 July 2002.

Hungary could provide lessons for countries in earlier stages of their tobacco epidemics on how these efforts can be prevented, neutralised or counterbalanced.

Tobacco control advocates may consider giving more attention to developing links with agencies with natural links to tobacco companies. This might include providing incentives for the advertising industry to representing the interests of the public health community. *"Buying out"* tobacco advertising and sponsorship using a separate fund created by the introduction of tobacco tax earmarking represents a possible financial mechanism for the involvement of the advertising industry in promoting health instead of deadly products. The examples of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) in Victoria, Australia and of the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) indicates the viability of this approach (51, 52).

The relative silence of the tobacco control community in Hungary during the development of the new advertising regulation also provided a solid ground for the communication of positions of the TTCs. Industry documents and the documentation of the 1997 advertising bill indicate that ministries of agriculture, and trade and industry (later, ministry of economic affairs), along with MPs, especially those from parliamentary committees other then health, could also be targeted with specific information to counterbalance the continuous lobbying efforts of tobacco companies. Learning about the arguments often used by tobacco companies when promoting their interests could be used for formulating and communicating the counter-arguments of the tobacco control community in time. Also, political changes should be carefully monitored and further concentrated efforts are needed in the case of any change in the human resources of decision making bodies. Working in partnerships is essential for those committed to preventing suffering and death related to tobacco consumption.

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