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Answer given by Vice-President Jourová
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.3.2020)

The Commission's overall transparency framework ensures an accountable and transparent administration which is in line with the obligations of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Therefore, the Commission does not intend to revise the Decisions referred to by the Honourable Member¹. These Decisions, supplemented by the Working Methods of the European Commission² and the Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission³, as well as by the Transparency Register and its Code of Conduct⁴, provide a strong framework for the Commission's relations with interest representatives. This includes the reporting obligations of decision-makers in relation to meetings with stakeholders.

The overriding principles regarding contacts with interest groups are transparency, integrity and equality of treatment, in order to protect the general interest of the Union. These principles apply to all policy areas, including tobacco control, and to contacts with representatives of the tobacco industry. The Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, responsible for public health policies including tobacco control, has supplemented the Commission's transparency rules with measures to ensure the publication online of reports of all meetings with the tobacco industry, in a proactive manner.

Any documents relating to meetings with representatives of the tobacco industry, as all documents drawn up or held by the Commission, are covered by Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 on public access to documents⁵.

¹ 2014/838/EU, Euratom: Commission Decision of 25 November 2014 on the publication of information on meetings held between Directors-General of the Commission and organisations or self-employed individuals, OJ L 343, 28.11.2014, p. 19-21 and 2014/839/EU, Euratom: Commission Decision of 25 November 2014 on the publication of information on meetings held between Members of the Commission and organisations or self-employed individuals, OJ L 343, 28.11.2014, p. 22-24.

² Communication from the President to the Commission – The Working Methods of the European Commission, P(2019) 2, 1 December 2019.

³ Commission Decision of 31 January 2018 on a Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission, C(2018)700 final.

⁴ Agreement between the European Parliament and the European Commission on the transparency register for organisations and self-employed individuals engaged in EU policy-making and policy implementation (Annex III), OJ L 277, 19 September 2014, p.11-24.

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, OJ L 345, 29 December 2001, p. 94.