

Exploiting smokers and young people for ill-gotten gains

Suzanne Gabriels, expert tobacco control Belgian Foundation Against Cancer

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In Belgium, [the decision by the Ghent soccer club to sell nicotine pouches](#) sparked an outcry. The Foundation Against Cancer is always ready to help smokers and is very understanding of their difficulties, as demonstrated by our Quitline and [Buddy Deal](#) stop smoking campaign. We are less willing toward tobacco companies simply because their strategy is to ensure smokers remain addicted to nicotine. Rather than have smokers reflect on their addiction, the tobacco giant BAT prefers to remain present in places where you are no longer allowed to smoke, such as at a football match.

It takes effort to stop smoking. Banning smoking at soccer stadiums or on train platforms, [measures recently approved by the federal parliament](#), help the smoker in making the decision to try and stop smoking. When smoking is banned in more and more places, smokers are increasingly confronted by the disadvantages of their addiction. This is precisely why this tobacco manufacturer is seeking to intervene.

Profits for shareholders remain the aim of such a company. Profits from which the big boss at BAT will certainly benefit. In the United Kingdom, there was recent [criticism of the incentives granted to the CEO](#) for achieving the company targets: up to 750 percent of his salary, or a deal worth 11.8 million pounds. Talk about ill-gotten gains!

BAT is the ultimate example of a company that systematically challenges the existing advertising regulations of tobacco legislation. Recently, at the Brussels court of first instance, BAT was once again found guilty of illegal tobacco advertising.

But the fines are low, and it can be anything from two to six years between the submission of an infraction report by the control services and a verdict by the courts, that is, if the case ever makes it to court. It's not a situation to strike fear in the hearts of the tobacco companies.

So what do we at the Foundation Against Cancer recommend?

- 1) First, stop the growth of the nicotine pouches market.
- 2) Disposable e-cigarettes that are particularly popular among young people and place a huge burden on the environment are also something we can well do without.

3) What should also stop is the growing number of flavours in which e-cigarettes are available and the names designed to attract young people.

To help smokers stop smoking, the last thing we need is the uncontrolled growth of alternative nicotine products. Yet this is precisely what we are seeing at present.

We also believe that the major tobacco companies, with their ill-gotten gains, [should pay for the damage to health they cause](#) so that money is freed up for better tobacco prevention, support in smoking cessation and patient care.

Finally, we call on the interministerial conference, which is to decide the [strategy for a smoke-free generation](#), to adopt a clear long-term strategy for the supply and sale of nicotine products so that as a society, we can look to the future and take the lead rather than always reacting after the event and being exposed to the practices of profit-seeking multinationals.

“Making a profit is allowed; making a lot of profit is also allowed.”

But ill-gotten gains and undermining the positive effect of a non-smoking soccer stadium by selling nicotine pouches is unacceptable. As are displays of nicotine pouches in discotheques, alongside the Red Bull and the slogan “Ready to party?”

Such practices are not in any way about helping smokers but rather about finding a new target public for new addictive products.