

The three Nordic health ministers today launch a Joint Nordic Guidance for Public Officials on Interacting with the Tobacco Industry

Tobacco use remains a leading cause of preventable death and disability as well as social health inequalities in the Nordic countries, and in the recent years new harmful nicotine products have entered the Nordic markets.

“All the Nordic countries have for years had a fruitful government collaboration in the tobacco control area. Denmark, Iceland and Norway have now taken this collaboration a step further by adopting this Guide”, says Norwegian Minister of Health Jan Christian Vestre.

“Our governments are committed to reducing the prevalence of tobacco and nicotine use, and we have a clear responsibility to protect our children and youth against these products. Nicotine is not only harmful to health, but can also be a stepping stone to tobacco consumption”, says Danish Minister for the Interior and Health Sophie Løhde.

“In Iceland, the healthcare system is facing significant challenges because the demand for services is increasing while we lack healthcare professionals. Therefore, it is important to strengthen public health through health promotion and prevention. Tobacco- and nicotine-related prevention is particularly important in this regard.” says Icelandic Minister of Health Anna D. Möller.

For these reasons, public officials should interact with the tobacco industry only when and to the extent strictly necessary to achieve effective regulation and policy development.

The Joint Nordic Guide has been adopted by the health ministers of Denmark, Iceland and Norway, and outlines the obligations placed on public agencies and officials by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 5.3, with concrete examples and advice specifically suited to the circumstances in the Nordic countries. It is intended as a framework for best practice implementation of these obligations. Further, the three Nordic countries agree that the obligation under Article 5.3 include the nicotine industry.

Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC

The Nordic countries are Parties to the FCTC, which aims to protect present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke.

FCTC Article 5.3 requires public officials to protect public health policies in relation to tobacco control “from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry”.

Parties should implement measures in all branches of government that may have an interest in, or the capacity to, affect public health policies with respect to tobacco control.

[Link to the Joint Nordic Guidance](#)