

MEDIA INFORMATION

For immediate release



EU Lobbying: Getting to the bottom of it *Confusion is not in the public interest*

Brussels, February 22, 2013 – Japan Tobacco International (JTI) welcomes the proposal from some Members of the European Parliament for a special inquiry into tobacco lobbying at the European Commission (EC). *“Open and transparent lobbying activities to inform elected officials and civil servants over policy decision-making clearly serve the public interest”*, said Thierry Lebeaux, Head of EU Affairs at JTI.

The Company certainly hopes that such an inquiry would be given all ways and means to carry out a full investigation into lobbying practices and solidly question *all* lobby groups, whether from commercial or not-for-profit organizations. In 1996 the European Parliament was the first to introduce regulation of lobbyists leading to the adoption of a Code of Conduct. *“Despite strengthening it over time with various measures, some elected officials are now under the impression that the process is being abused”*, said Mr. Lebeaux. *“We would welcome the opportunity to participate and demonstrate our perfect compliance with the European Transparency Initiative and the European Parliament’s Code of Conduct for lobbyists”*, he added.

The European Commission and the European Parliament have recognized that all interested parties have the right to argue their case and present their point of view to EU institutions, all in the public interest. Preventing any party from doing so abuses the rules. Using the non-binding and wildly misapplied guidelines on Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control as means of excluding and censoring tobacco companies is intellectually dishonest. As the Commission rightly underlined earlier this month, *“Those Guidelines contain no specific compulsory requirements on holding meetings or on the publicity of such meetings”*.

JTI is one of several interested groups – with relevant expertise – seeking to inform government bodies about the revision of the Tobacco Product Directive. Elected representatives and officials should have unfettered access to the facts, information and opinions that all of these groups can provide, even if only to reject them. *“Only through clarity and openness can the EU achieve sound public policies and appropriate regulation for any industry”*, concluded Mr. Lebeaux.

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JTI is a member of the Japan Tobacco Group of Companies, a leading international tobacco product manufacturer. It markets world-renowned brands such as Winston, Mild Seven and Camel. Other global brands include Benson & Hedges, Silk Cut, Sobranie, Glamour and LD. With headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and core revenue of USD 11.8 billion in the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012, JTI has operations in more than 120 countries and about 25,000 employees. For more information, visit www.jti.com

Note to Editors

The debate on lobbying is not new. In 1996 the European Parliament was the first to introduce regulation of lobbyists leading to the adoption of a Code of Conduct. Later in 2005 the broader European Transparency Register was introduced. The Code of Conduct is an efficient means to regulate lobbying and encourage ethical behavior of interest groups through clear do's and don'ts for lobbyists when representing interests in the EU institutions. They apply to all interested representatives, whether from commercial or not-for-profit organizations. Breaches of the Code of Conduct can lead to various deterrent sanctions including being blacklisted by the EU institutions.