

Guy Ryder, Director-General
International Labour Organization
4, route des Morillons
1211 Geneva 22

(By email: ryder@ilo.org)

Geneva, 28 January 2016

Dear Mr. Ryder,

My association, OxyRomandie, has been engaged in tobacco control since the beginning of the millennium, both at the international level (we participated on the side of civil society in the elaboration of the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, the WHO/FCTC) and locally (notably we were instrumental in the organization of the local referendum to ban smoking in public places). Being located in Geneva, we also pay particular attention to possible interferences of the tobacco industry in the policies of international organizations of the United Nations, in the spirit of Article 5.3 of the WHO/FCTC and its guidelines. As you know, the fight launched by WHO to combat the current non-communicable disease crisis – of which tobacco is the greatest risk factor – requires close cooperation among a wide range of international stakeholders, including the ILO. This needs to be protected against attempts by the tobacco industry to derail such cooperation.

In this context, my association was surprised to see the ILO emblem being used on the homepage of the website of Philip Morris International, as shown below (www.pmi.com, accessed on 28 January 2016):



We understand that the ILO logo is legally protected and, according to your own rule, “may not be used without express written permission which will only be granted when appropriate in very limited circumstances.”

It seems unlikely that featuring the ILO logo on the home page of a tobacco multinational is part of these very limited circumstances. Furthermore, the presence of the ILO logo on PMI’s website suggests an association between the inter-governmental organization and the tobacco company that would clearly be in violation of Article 5.3 of the WHO/FCTC, a treaty which has been ratified by an overwhelming majority of ILO’s Member States. Finally, in the improbable case PMI had obtained ILO’s permission to use its emblem, one could assume that the permission was not granted indefinitely, while it is here associated with the announcement of an event that was to take place in June 2015.

Given the above, we principally wanted to draw the issue of the possible illegal use of ILO’s logo by PMI to your attention, requesting that such use be stopped, as it gives the false impression that the ILO is providing its moral support to the tobacco multinational. Accessorily, and in the unlikely case that PMI obtained ILO’s permission to use its logo, we would kindly ask that a copy of the request made in writing by PMI (as per ILO’s rule) be provided to us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Diethelm', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pascal A. Diethelm, President

Copy: Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization
Dr. Vera da Costa et Silva, Head of the Convention Secretariat, Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
Dr. Douglas Bettcher, Director, Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases, WHO
Mr. Francis Thompson, Executive Director, Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control