(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-002512/26
to the Commission
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (Renew)
(17 June 2026)

Subject: Tobacco industry lobbying in the name of individual citizens

The public consultation for the Single-Use Plastics Directive generated 531 responses, of which many mentioned a ban on cigarette filters. Among them, a vocal group of 'individual citizens' argued fiercely against regulation. According to research by the Fair Resource Foundation ([1]), 80% of this input was linked to employees of Cerdia, a leading manufacturer of filter material for cigarettes. I have the following questions:

1. To what extent does the alleged strategic deployment of 'citizens' by Cerdia bypass Article 5.3 of the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control regarding the transparency of interactions with the tobacco industry, and the Commission's own Interinstitutional Agreement regarding the registration of lobby activities?

2. Will the Commission investigate these responses from 'citizens' and, if they are confirmed to be part of an industry-orchestrated lobby campaign, are there any steps the Commission could take, such as sanctions against the initiator?

3. If the responses are indeed confirmed to be part of an industry-orchestrated lobby campaign, can the Commission flag them as such within the evaluation, and can they consequently be excluded from that evaluation?

Submitted: 17.6.2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(18 August 2026)

The Commission ensures that EU policies are evidence-based, particularly through a range of consultation activities. Stakeholders have the general right to contact the Commission on matters of interest to them.

The Commission is strongly committed to complying with Article 5.3 of the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and follows the guidelines on transparency for its implementation.

It uses the Transparency Register established by the Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 ([1]) as its key tool for enhancing transparency concerning interest representation.

Public consultations form part of the broader range of consultation activities carried out for an evaluation. Any identified campaigns are explicitly reported, as well as referenced in both the factual summary report and the synopsis report linked to the evaluation.

In the specific case of the public consultation on the evaluation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive (EU) 2019/904 ([2]), the submitted replies are under assessment in view of the findings from the Fair Resource Foundation and, if appropriate, the factual summary and the synopsis report for this public consultation will be updated.

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[1] https://noplasticfilter.org/tobacco-industry-interference-with-supd/.

([1]) http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2021/611/oj.

([2]) ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/904/oj.