

DFWC welcomes new research into illicit trade in tobacco products



The Duty Free World Council (DFWC) has welcomed the decision of Parties to the Illicit Trade Protocol to proceed with evidence-based research to “ascertain the extent of illicit trade in tobacco products related to duty free sales”, mandated by Article 13.2 of the Protocol.

Article 13.2 of the Protocol required the research to be conducted no later than five years after the Protocol entered into force. Parties to the Protocol agreed to commission the research at the Third Meeting of the Parties (MOP3), which took place in Panama City, February 12 to 15, 2024, having been delayed from its initial date of late November 2023.

The overarching focus of the Illicit Trade Protocol is to target material sources of illicit trade of tobacco products in the global economy.

Speaking on behalf of the industry, Duty Free World Council President Sarah Branquinho said, “We have always been clear that we reject unfair and unsubstantiated allegations that our industry is a major contributor to illicit trade. Our supply chain is one of the most secure and transparent in the world, and we have worked closely with customs and enforcement agencies across the world for decades to ensure criminal activities such as illicit trade have no place in it.

“We therefore welcome the decision of the Protocol Parties to proceed with the planned evidence-based research, and we look forward to the opportunity to clearly demonstrate that our industry is a partner in the fight against illicit trade, not a contributor to it. As we have said many times, we are fully prepared to offer any data, technical expertise or knowledge that may be helpful to evidence-based research. We extend this offer to the WHO once again.”