



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

*Le Président*

Ms. Lisa Lu  
CEO  
International Youth Tobacco Control

Paris, 8 November 2021

Dear Ms Lisa Lu,

Thank you for your open letter of 19 October urging the FIA to “end tobacco sponsorship in Formula 1.”

I have recalled on numerous occasions and will repeat it once more here, that the FIA is firmly opposed to tobacco advertising and is fully committed to working constructively with public authorities and representatives of the civil society on this public health issue of major importance.

Much has already been achieved in this respect. Many countries, including all Member States of the European Union, have adopted stringent legislations banning advertising of tobacco products or like-products. As a matter of fact, tobacco products and like-products are no longer featured in Formula 1 sponsorship and advertising.

In a comprehensive perspective, work still remains to be done indeed, and this is primarily the role and responsibility of the public authorities in each country. You will remind that the unequivocal recommendation issued on 26 June 2003 by the FIA not only urged all participants to cease all forms of tobacco sponsorship in motorsport as from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006, but also called upon governments to adopt appropriate laws and regulations in order to prohibit all forms of promotion of tobacco everywhere.

Earlier this year, in May, the European Commission published its first report on the Tobacco Products directive, five years after it became applicable in 2016. This report notably advocates improvements in enforcement at national level and consideration of new markets developments, such as novel tobacco products. But at no point did this report suggest that public authorities ban, in a plain and simple manner, any form of advertising or sponsoring by a tobacco company, regardless of whether the scrutinized actions have or not the indirect effect of promoting tobacco products – most presumably because such approach would be successfully challenged. This is however, oddly enough, what your letter is requesting the FIA to do.

Of course, I am acutely conscious of the public concern and controversy triggered by the "Mission Winnow" and "A Better Tomorrow" initiatives launched in 2019 by Philip Morris International and British American Tobacco respectively. As of today, the investigation reportedly initiated in February 2019 by the European Commission in connection with these initiatives is still ongoing. And, to the best of our knowledge, no public enforcement authority nor any judge has adopted so far any adversarial position against the Winnow Mission or Better Tomorrow initiatives in consideration of the rules prohibiting sponsorship or advertising of tobacco products or like-products.

In this context, we consider that is not the role of the FIA to decide or speculate on whether such initiatives comply with applicable tobacco legislations and it would be totally inappropriate and certainly open to criticism that the FIA takes a position before the conclusion of the investigation of the EC above mentioned.


It is the responsibility of the governments to establish the rules and regulations concerning tobacco promotion, but there is a lack of level playing field at the global scale, the legislations vary from one country to another, and the FIA has to respect each of them as the case may be.

In addition, I wish also to remind that while the FIA is the owner of the FIA F1 World Championship and regulates its technical and sporting aspects, the exclusive right to exploit all commercial and intellectual property rights of the championship, which includes any sponsorship, has been assigned to a commercial right holder.

You may be sure that we have nevertheless made it very clear with all actors involved in Formula 1 that no breach of anti-tobacco rules will be tolerated by the FIA and that we will continue to monitor closely the evolving regulatory landscape.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Jean Todt