

Four tobacco makers accused by French anti-smoking of collusion

January 25 2015

A French anti-smoking association said Sunday it had filed a case accusing makers of Marlboro, Camel, Lucky Strike and Gauloise cigarettes of colluding to limit prices so smokers won't cut their consumption.

According to Yves Martinet, president of the National Committee Against Tobacco, the companies cited in the complaint agreed to "limit themselves to small increases that in reality are adjustments for inflation, (and) which don't influence the (consumption) of smokers."

"The four big international [tobacco](#) industrials work as a cartel, (and) do all they can so that prices rise in a moderate manner to ensure [consumption](#) doesn't fall," Martinet told AFP.

The four manufacturers could not be reached by AFP for immediate comment.

Martinet said the charges—allegedly the first [civil complaint](#) in France for alleged price fixing collusion—were filed in early January to French public prosecutors.

They have three months to decide whether to open an official inquiry, or dismiss case.

According to the association's lawyer, Pierre Kopp, the pricing of cigarette is up to individual tobacco manufacturers, apart from

mandatory increases, via taxes, regularly imposed by the French state.

There are about 13 million smokers in France, where tobacco-related illness is the leading cause of avoidable death, killing 73,000 people each year.

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