

France sets cigarette plain package date, JTI to file appeal

March 22 2016

France published Tuesday a decree setting a January 1 deadline for cigarette manufacturers to introduce plain packages, but Japan Tobacco International immediately said it would challenge the measure.

The publication of the decree was the culmination of efforts launched by the government in 2014 to require tobacco firms to sell cigarettes in packages that contain neither logos nor distinctive colouring.

But Japan Tobacco International's French subsidiary quickly announced it would challenge the decree before the Council of State.

"The introduction of plain packages doesn't take into account the damage it does to the property rights of companies, in particular intellectual [property rights](#)," JTI France's Corporate Relations and Communications Director Benoit Bas said in a statement.

That is the argument tobacco companies have used against the introduction of [plain packaging](#) in Australia.

In 2012, Australia became the first country to mandate plain packaging for cigarettes in a bid to reduce smoking rates, and is being followed by Ireland and Britain as well as France.

The British ban on logos and branding on [cigarette packets](#) goes into force in May, but [tobacco firms](#) have filed a legal challenge.

The appeal by JTI before the Council of State, which is France's supreme court for administrative justice, won't suspend the introduction of plain packages.

Tobacco firms lost their legal cases in Australia and failed to have the matter accepted for international arbitration.

They also failed to overturn an EU law allowing its member states to impose plain packaging.

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