

06/08/2021

For the attention of:

Kwasi Kwarteng MP, UK Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Sajid Javid MP, UK Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

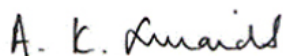
We, the leadership of the European Respiratory Society (ERS), are writing to express our great concern about the proposed acquisition of Vectura by the tobacco company Philip Morris International (PMI). News of this deal is appalling to the 35,000+ members of our society, made up of clinicians, allied health professionals, researchers, and scientists, who all work towards the common goal of alleviating suffering from lung disease.

The tobacco industry is responsible for the suffering and early death of millions of people around the world each year, and tobacco is one of the biggest preventable causes of many lung diseases. ERS is very concerned that the proposed deal allows PMI to obscure its image as a company that profits from getting people addicted to its dangerous products, and that a tobacco company will be in a position to abuse the inhalation technologies developed by Vectura to make its tobacco products even more addictive.

It is highly unethical for a tobacco company to profit from addicting people to its immensely harmful products, then subsequently seek to further profit from the medicines produced to treat harms caused by its own products. The blatant conflict of interest and corruption of public morals should be of serious concern to United Kingdom (UK) regulators.

Should Vectura shareholders approve the deal on 24 August 2021, we urge UK regulators to use their authority to intervene in the deal, in the interest of protecting public health and public confidence in essential medical supply chains.

Signed:



Prof. Anita Simonds, President of the European Respiratory Society



Prof. Jonathan Grigg, Chair of the European Respiratory Society Tobacco Control Committee