

Articulating Transnational Mobilization and National Lawmaking

Lessons from the Advocacy for the World Health Assembly Transparency Resolution in France

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Background

The transparency resolution for health products proposed by Italy during the 2019 World Health Assembly (WHA) generated considerable opposition from some high-income countries. In the context of opaque price-setting negotiations and strong intellectual property rights, securing the adoption of the resolution was particularly challenging for civil society and required targeted advocacy among governments along with organizing citizen mobilization worldwide.

In France, using these techniques enabled organizations to push the government towards more transparency and improved access to HIV/AIDS therapeutic innovations.

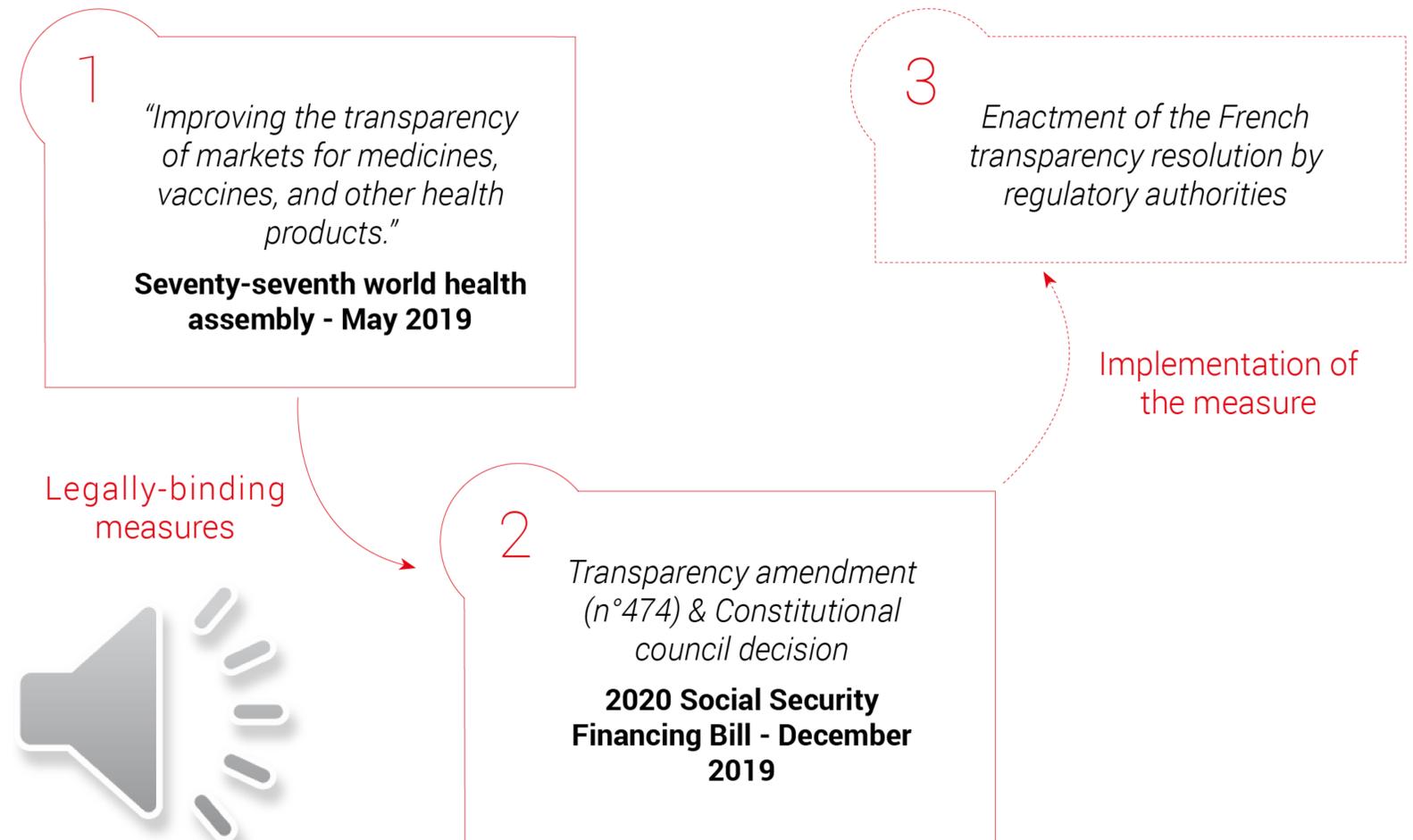
Description

In line with WHA and French parliamentary agendas, advocacy strategies were deployed from February to December 2019. Along with other organizations, Doctors of the World, Global Health Advocates and AIDES' information and advocacy campaigns first targeted the Ministry of Health, which did not release any official position.

Therefore, lobbying was shifted towards parliamentarians, informing them on the resolution and submitting oral questions to the government.

This lobbying campaign was backed by international alliances, grassroots mobilization (online demonstrations), and direct questioning of the government in social networks and the press. Pressure was put on French decision-makers, ultimately leading to a clear positioning of France in favor of the resolution.

Following this resolution, during the drafting of the 2020 Social Security Financing Bill for September, civil society led a new campaign to make sure the government's commitments were followed by actions. In December, the parliament adopted with a large cross-partisan majority a key amendment stating pharmaceutical firms will have to publish the amount of public subsidies received for the development of treatments.



Lessons

Multiscale advocacy and campaigns compelled France to take a symbolic public stand in favor of the transparency resolution on the day of the vote. By redeploying similar strategies nationally, civil society led decision-makers to adopt legally-binding transparency measures.

Conclusions

This campaign created a cross-partisan consensus in favor of more transparency in price-setting negotiations. Unfortunately, the measure adopted by the parliament was censored by the constitutional council for procedural reasons. Next step will thus be to advocate for a re-adoption of the measure, the drafting of new transparency propositions, and towards an effective enactment of the transparency resolution by regulatory authorities.

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