

Moscow to Enact Smoking Ban

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Smoking is to be banned in bars and restaurants by 2014 under new rules. **Denis Grishkin**

Visitors to Moscow's bars and restaurant will soon enjoy a smoke-free environment, thanks to new rules in the works as part of the city's ambitious plan for development through 2025.

The ban will spread much further than just evenings out, as the development plans also spell out restrictions on smoking in educational and medical institutions, government offices, and on public transportation that will come into force in 2012, Gazeta.ru reported. The plan is to unfold in stages. Restaurants and bars, along with workplaces, are scheduled to become smoke-free by 2014.

The new guidelines will also decrease the number of places alcohol is sold by 10 times. Authorities will limit the number of liquor licenses that will be sold, part of a strategy to improve health that will also boost fines for violations of rules governing the consumption of alcohol.

Last November, the Health Ministry said that breathing in a healthy way is possible only in cafes that are completely non-smoking, saying that even in non-smoking sections, levels

of harmful substances in the air exceed the norm by 14 times.

Last week, chief narcologist at the Health and Social Development Ministry Yevgeny Bryun defended smokers, who he said "pay for their sin" through tobacco taxes, and advocated for the creation of "civilized, humane conditions" where smokers can "fulfill their painful needs."

Russia has more smokers per capita than any other country. According to research by the World Health Organization and Euromonitor International, 40 percent of residents smoke, including 60 percent of men and a quarter of youth between 13 and 15 years old.

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