

Cabinet Backs Bill to Ban Smoking in Public Places

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 18, 2012

The  Moscow Times

The Cabinet has backed proposed legislation that would ban smoking in public places, paving the way for the bill to be debated in the State Duma.

The bill, which would also limit tobacco advertising and sponsorship, aims to help tackle a public health crisis in the world's No.2 cigarette market, after China.

"The bill foresees a complete ban on smoking in public places. ... Gradually, by Jan. 1, 2015, restaurants, cafes and other retail outlets must be free from smoking," Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said at the Cabinet meeting, according to a transcript on the government's website.

The number of sale points will be reduced, and advertising of tobacco products will be limited, Medvedev said.

Foreign tobacco firms — including British American Tobacco , Imperial Tobacco, Japan

Tobacco, and Phillip Morris — control more than 90 percent of Russian sales and have been lobbying to have proposed legislation softened.

On Tuesday, Medvedev launched a "war on smoking" and promised a British-style smoking ban. It was the highest-profile attack by a government official on the tobacco industry to date.

In a video address posted on his blog, Medvedev attacked tobacco firms for "endangering the lives of our children" and criticized the Yeltsin government for allowing foreign tobacco corporations to invest in the country.

(Reuters, MT)

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