

Excise Taxes Push Help Russian Alcohol Consumption Down 13%

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Alcohol consumption in Russia is down 13 percent this year, but growing drug use among young people and poor drinking habits have health officials concerned, Kommersant reported Friday.

Recent figures from the Health Ministry show that 13.5 liters of alcohol are consumed annually per person, a reduction over previous years. The drop is due to the government's well thought out anti-alcohol policy, including an increased excise tax, said Pavel Shapkin, head of the National Alcohol Policy Center.

But while alcohol consumption here is waning, more young people are turning to drugs, said Erken Imanbayev, the head doctor at the Professional Medicine Clinic.

Russia's chief drug doctor, Yevgeny Bryun, also criticized the fashion in which his compatriots drink — in one gulp and with low-quality appetizers. These habits aside, Russia's

alcohol culture is improving, he said. Russians currently drink alcohol in quantities that are similar to those in the U.S. and European countries.

In 2011, the country ranked fourth in terms of alcohol consumption globally, with more than 15.5 liters imbibed per capita, according to the World Health Organization.

The National Alcohol Policy Center's Shapkin said his organization plans to solidify these improvements by further promoting anti-alcohol messages.

One measure Shapkin supports involves asking Russian television channels to stop broadcasting films that show "a loyal attitude to alcohol consumption," or at least add a subtitle during pro-drinking scenes that warn of the dangers of alcohol.

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