

Fewer Smokers in Russia Since Anti-Tobacco Law Took Effect

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Hold-outs among Moscow's smoking population on a balcony in late July.

The number of smokers in Russia has dropped 6 percent since the country adopted a stringent package of anti-tobacco legislation last year, a new poll has revealed.

A state-owned pollster, the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, revealed on Wednesday that the percentage of smokers in the country had tumbled from 41 percent to 35 percent in the past year, suggesting that the government's recent anti-smoking campaign is beginning to have an impact.

In less optimistic news, the poll also revealed that only a third of the country's smokers have made an effort to respect the new ban on smoking in public places.

In June last year, a law banning smoking in public places such as health care and educational facilities, government buildings, public transportation and sports venues came into force. In June of this year, the scope of the smoking ban was extended to restaurants, bars, long-distance trains and hotels, while a ban on tobacco advertisements also took effect.

The new anti-tobacco measures were greeted as a victory by a majority of the Russian population. A poll conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center in February found that 76 percent of Russians were in favor of the smoking ban in public places.

But the new measures were lamented by Russia's restaurant owners, 82 percent of whom thought a smoking ban would hurt their business, according to a survey by the independent Levada Center pollster that was commissioned by the All-Russia Movement for the Rights of Smokers.

The most recent state poll's results were based on the responses of 1,600 adults across 42 Russian regions in July.

See also:

[Anti-Smoking Movement Raids Moscow Train Station](#)

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