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Russia's Alcohol Market Slumps 1.6%

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AP/Yana Lapikova

Russia's alcohol market has fallen by 1.6 percent compared to 2015, government statistics have revealed.

The country's whisky market is among the hardest hit, with sales tumbling by 8.2 percent in the first nine months of 2016. Revellers also turned their backs on champagne and brandy, sending figures spiraling by 4.2 percent and 2.3 percent respectively.

"Russians are no longer interested in alcohol in the same way," said Vadim Drobiz, president of the Alcohol Market Research Center. "It's very noticeable in the whiskey market, where casual buyers have all but been washed away," he told the RBC newspaper.

Sectors bucking the trend include Russia's cider and mead market, where sales continue to rise after explosive growth in 2014.

Figures grew by 34.8 percent in 2015, following phenomenal growth of 316.8 percent just one year earlier.

Of the 816 million decaliters of alcohol bought by Russians in the first nine months of 2016, cider made up just 3 million decaliters — but retailers expect its popularity to keep on rising as the country's ongoing economic crisis forces Russians to tighten their belts.

Strong cider costs four times less than drinks of a similar strength made with hard spirits, RBC reported.

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