

Illicit trade in cigarettes, on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, has doubled in seven months of 2021

The volume of the illicit trade in cigarettes is growing in the Republic of Moldova and reached a share of 4.1% in October 2021. The data were published by IPSOS, one of the largest market research companies in the world. The study data show a doubling of the illicit trade in tobacco products in September- October 2021, compared to February-March 2021 (2.3%).

The main source of illicit trade are cigarettes without excise stamps ("Cheap Whites"), with a share of 1.4%, cigarettes of "Duty-Free" origin - 1.3%; cigarettes destined for sale in countries other than Moldova (Non-Domestic Duty-Paid) account for - 0.4% and the share of other cigarettes of unknown origin is - 0.8%.

An increased incidence of the illicit trade in cigarettes is registered in the southern region of the country, increasing from 1.4% to 7.8% and in the regions located close to the border with Ukraine -7.6%. This phenomenon is also increasing in the Center area and in rural areas.

IPSOS research data show that illegal products are mostly sold in grocery stores (30%), followed by Duty-Free stores (14%) and markets (11%).

The districts with the highest level of cigarette sales on the black market are Cantemir (18.8%), Gagauzia (13.3%), Straseni (14.8%), followed by Basarabeasca (9.4%), Soroca (8.5%), Ocnita (8.5%) , Dubasari (8.0%), Riscani (7.6%) and Anenii Noi (7.7%).

The study was conducted by IPSOS in 2021 on behalf of the major nicotine products producers (BAT, ITG, JTI, PMI), in two waves, in February-March and in September-October 2021.

The research methodology includes interviews and sample collection. A total of 1545 adult smokers from rural and urban areas of the country were surveyed.