

IPSOS study: Tobacco illicit trade in Republic of Moldova doubled in October 2022

The black-market in the Republic of Moldova increased significantly from 4.1% in October 2021 to 7.4% in October 2022, according to IPSOS data.

The study has also identified an almost doubling of the illicit trade in tobacco products at the border regions with Ukraine, from 7.6% to 14.4%, affecting the districts of Briceni, Donduseni, Causeni, Ocnita, Soroca, etc., as well as in the Northern region, from 4.6% to 12%. Illegal trade also increased at the border with Romania, from 4.6% to 9%, in the districts of Hancesti, Nisporeni, Ungheni, Edinet, Leova, etc.

The main source of illicit trade are cigarettes of unknown origin or that do not correspond to national legislation, the share of these products increased significantly, from 0.8% to 3.1%. The share of "Illicit Whites" has doubled to 2.8%. The share of "Duty-Free" cigarettes represents 1.3% and cigarettes intended for sale in countries other than Moldova (Non-Domestic Duty-Paid) hold – 0.2%.

The average price per illegal cigarette pack is 25 lei, at the same time, the price for legally marketed cigarette pack is 34 lei.

The research carried out by IPSOS, one of the largest market research companies in the world, shows that rural areas are the most affected by the illegal trade with tobacco products, with a share of 9.1%, while in urban areas the share is 5.4%.

Illicit products are mainly sold in grocery stores (59%), followed by minimarkets (10.2%) and shops at PECO stations (5%).

The study was carried out by IPSOS during September - October 2022. The research methodology includes face-to-face in-home interviews on tablets, with package and stick collection. A total of 1532 adult smokers, aged 19-64, from rural and urban areas were interviewed, nationwide, except Transnistria. The research was commissioned by the main cigarette manufacturers in Moldova, JTI and PMI.