

Illicit cigarette market in Moldova at 6.9% in September–October 2025

The share of illicit cigarettes in the Republic of Moldova fell to **6.9% in September–October 2025**, down from **7.9% in April–May 2025**, according to the latest IPSOS study.

The research shows that the main source of illicit trade remains cigarettes of unknown origin, uncompliant with the law or/and which copy an authentic brand without authorization. Their share stands at 3.8%, the same level (3.8%) as in the previous wave.

The share of "Illicit whites", i.e., cigarettes not intended for sale on the Moldova market, is at 2.2%, down from 3.4% in the previous wave.

Meanwhile, the share of tobacco products intended for sale in countries other than Moldova, i.e., "non-domestic duty-paid" accounts for 0.8%, and of cigarettes of "duty-free" origin for 0.1% of total consumption.

The share of "Illicit whites", i.e., cigarettes not intended for sale on the Moldova market, declined significantly in the North region (from 5.2% to 1.4%).

The Southern region continues to record the highest level of illicit cigarette trade at 12.2%, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points compared to the previous wave.

The average retail price of illicit cigarettes is estimated at 43.5 lei per pack, while legally traded cigarettes sell for an average of 52.8 lei per pack, meaning illicit products are sold at around 9.3 MDL less per pack.

The IPSOS study also shows that grocery stores remain the main sales channel for illicit cigarettes, representing 45.3% of illegal sales. Minimarkets registered a 15.2% share of illicit purchases, while supermarkets accounted for 8.6% of total illicit trade.

The study was conducted by IPSOS, one of the largest market research companies in the world, in September-October 2025. The previous study was conducted in April-May 2025. The research methodology involves interviews with sample collection. A total of approximately 1,541 adult smokers aged 19 to 64 were surveyed, from rural and urban areas of the country, except for the Transnistrian region. The study was commissioned by the main cigarette manufacturers present in Moldova - JTI and PMI.