

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Significantly increase the price of tobacco products by increasing the excise tax.** Price increases through higher taxes have been shown to be the most effective measures worldwide in reducing tobacco use and saving lives, including discouraging smoking initiation among adults and youth.
2. **Raise awareness about the harmful health effects of tobacco consumption, and introduce comprehensive tobacco control programs in order to reduce smoking among both youth and adults** by organizing public campaigns in the media as well as in schools, hospitals, and workplaces. In addition, the harmful effects of tobacco should be introduced as a topic in education curriculum, starting with primary schools and especially in secondary schools.
3. **Develop effective smoking cessation services and make them accessible and affordable to all smokers.** Cessation services in the form of consultations with medical professionals by phone or in person should be made widely available. The consultations should be made available in schools, colleges, general practitioner offices, and hospitals. In addition, well-functioning telephone help lines and government-funded support groups could support smokers in cessation.
4. **Apply evidence-based policy, and coordinate the efforts of all relevant stakeholders.** For effective tobacco control policy, constant monitoring on tobacco use is required. In this effort, as well as the development of action plans to reduce tobacco use, actors at various levels, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Institute for Public Health, and Customs Administration, should work in coordination.

## OBJECTIVES

- North Macedonia is a signatory country of the WHO FCTC. A general ban on smoking in public places, including restaurants and bars, came into effect on January 1, 2010. Monitoring and availability of accurate and timely information on tobacco use and tobacco control are among the key prerequisites for effective health and fiscal policies that will ensure prevention, reduce the harmful effects of tobacco use, and protect human health and life. This fact sheet is based on a report that aims to support tobacco control efforts in North Macedonia by providing country-specific data. It is one of the first studies to present comprehensive information and estimates regarding tobacco use, cessation, secondhand smoke exposure, economics, media exposure, and attitudes and perceptions of smokers.

## METHODOLOGY

- The data for this report were collected through a nationwide, face-to-face, in-home survey conducted on a sample of 1,006 respondents that was representative of the North Macedonian population aged 18–85. The study used a sampling frame based on data from the country's latest census conducted in 2002.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### TOBACCO USE

- Nearly half of adults in North Macedonia (48.4 percent) currently use tobacco. Smoking prevalence is 57.9 percent among men and 39.0 percent among women.
- Smoking prevalence increases with the age of smokers, reaching its peak at 45–54 years (60.1 percent for current daily smokers). After age 55, the prevalence rate begins to decrease until it is reduced by almost half at age 65–74.

- Most smokers in North Macedonia use manufactured cigarettes (92.0 percent) versus hand-rolled cigarettes (12.5 percent). Consumption of other tobacco products is about one percent.

### CESSATION

- Only 19.3 percent of all current smokers have tried to quit in the past 12 months, and the average period of smoking abstinence was 1.7 months. While the youngest smokers have the largest percentage of quit attempts, they also have the lowest average duration of abstinence. The opposite is true for older age groups.
- The most common reasons for an attempt to quit smoking are increased knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking (36.0 percent), price of cigarettes (31.6 percent), and illness (25.8 percent).
- The quit ratio (ratio of former smokers to ever smokers) is 18.1 percent.

### SECONDHAND SMOKE

- Less than half of non-smokers (42.9 percent) do not allow smoking inside their homes, and 28.3 percent only allow smoking outside or on the terrace.
- Approximately one-third of smokers (35.2 percent) face fairly strict smoking policies at home, and are only allowed to smoke on the terrace or outside.
- Two in five smokers (41.8 percent) have been told many times that their smoking bothers others, while 37.8 percent heard similar complaints a few times.

### ECONOMICS

- Manufactured cigarettes are twice as expensive as hand-rolled cigarettes (1.7 € versus 0.9 €, respectively, for 20 sticks).



- Smokers of manufactured cigarettes spend, on average, 30.7 € per month, while on hand-rolled cigarettes they spend 13.3 € per month.
- An average smoker smokes 382.0 manufactured cigarettes or 308.8 hand-rolled cigarettes per month.

### ATTITUDES

- More than half of adults (58.1 percent) consider prohibition of sale or use of tobacco products a useful strategy to reduce tobacco consumption.
- Most adults consider cigarettes to be expensive (44.8 percent) or very expensive (38.2 percent).
- With legislation prohibiting any type of advertising, only 4.8 percent of adults have noticed free samples of cigarettes as a tobacco promotion.

### ECONOMICS

Average amount spent on 20 manufactured cigarettes, in €	1.7
Average amount spent on 20 hand-rolled tobacco, in €	0.9
Average monthly spending on manufactured cigarettes, in €	30.7
Average monthly spending on hand-rolled tobacco, in €	13.3

### CESSATION

Smokers who made a quit attempt in the past 12 months, by reason	Percentage (95% CI)
Cigarettes became too expensive	31.6 (21.0, 44.6)
Other economic reasons (e.g., lower pay, layoff, or needed money for other purposes)	16.0 (9.3, 26.2)
Illness (any medical condition)	25.8 (16.5, 37.9)
Physician's or health care provider's advice	18.7 (70.6, 88.8)
Increased knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking	36.0 (25.6, 47.9)
Pregnancy/ birth of a child	1.6 (0.4, 6.2)
Pressure to quit by partner/relatives	16.3 (8.3, 29.6)
Smoke-free legislation	3.7 (1.3, 10.0)
Employer precluding hiring smokers	1.7 (0.4, 6.5)
No answer	2.4 (0.6, 9.2)

### ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

	Completely useless	Rather useless	Quite useful	Very useful
Possible strategies for control and limit of tobacco use	Percentage (95% CI)			
Free support for tobacco cessation, including nicotine replacement therapy	27.7 (24.4, 31.1)	27.5 (24.4, 30.9)	19.2 (16.6, 22.2)	16.2 (13.8, 19.0)
Making smoking or tobacco products sales illegal	11.1 (9.0, 13.8)	14.4 (12.1, 16.9)	23.7 (20.8, 26.9)	34.4 (24.9, 41.9)
Raising the price of cigarettes/tobacco products	15.0 (12.5, 17.9)	22.7 (19.9, 25.8)	27.8 (24.6, 31.3)	27.9 (24.8, 31.2)
Expansion of smoking bans	24.4 (21.3, 27.8)	24.9 (21.9, 28.1)	23.2 (20.2, 26.5)	22.7 (19.9, 25.7)
Restrict the number of shops that tobacco products can be sold in	19.4 (16.6, 22.6)	20.7 (17.9, 23.9)	23.2 (20.3, 26.3)	30.4 (27.3, 33.8)

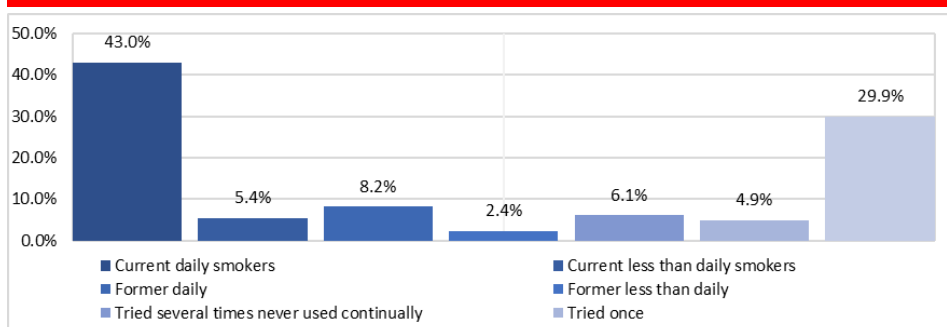
### SECONDHAND SMOKE

Exposure to tobacco smoke at home by smoking status and gender	Non-smokers		Smokers	
	Exposed	Not exposed	Exposed	Not exposed
	Percentage (95% CI)			
Overall	24.3 (19.2, 30.3)	72.2 (65.9, 77.7)	52.6 (47.3, 57.9)	46.0 (40.8, 51.4)
Male	24.7 (17.1, 34.4)	74.0 (64.3, 81.9)	49.2 (42.1, 56.4)	48.8 (41.6, 56.0)
Female	24.1 (17.6, 32.1)	71.0 (62.5, 78.3)	57.5 (49.6, 65.0)	42.2 (34.6, 50.1)

### TOBACCO USE

	Overall	Male	Female
	Percentage (95% CI)		
Current daily smokers	43.0 (39.5, 46.5)	50.6 (45.5, 55.8)	35.4 (30.9, 40.2)
Current less than daily smokers	5.4 (4.1, 7.1)	7.3 (5.1, 10.1)	3.6 (2.2, 5.7)
Former daily smokers	8.2 (6.6, 10.2)	11.3 (8.6, 14.6)	5.3 (3.6, 7.6)
Former less than daily smokers	2.4 (1.5, 3.8)	3.2 (1.8, 5.8)	1.7 (0.9, 3.2)
Tried several times	6.1 (4.6, 8.1)	4.5 (2.9, 7.0)	7.7 (5.3, 11.1)
Tried once	4.9 (3.5, 6.7)	2.8 (1.7, 4.8)	6.8 (4.6, 10)
Never smokers	29.9 (26.5, 33.5)	20.3 (16.2, 25.1)	39.4 (34.4, 44.6)

### Almost half of adults in North Macedonia are smokers



### Acknowledgments

Analytica is working in cooperation with the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade, which is coordinating a regional network of researchers in Southeastern Europe on tobacco taxation. The project is funded by the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) Institute for Health Research and Policy to conduct economic research on tobacco taxation in North Macedonia. UIC is a partner of the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use. The views expressed in this document cannot be attributed to, nor do they represent the views of UIC, the Institute for Health Research and Policy, or Bloomberg Philanthropies.