



EUROPE

31 May 2013 Last updated at 19:49 ET

Russian smoking ban comes into force

A law banning smoking in some public places and restricting tobacco advertising is due to come into effect in Russia on Saturday.

Smoking will be banned at workplaces, housing block stairwells, buses and commuter trains and within 15m of train stations and airports.

In 2014, the ban will be extended to restaurants, bars, ships and trains.

Russia has one of the highest smoking rates in the world with around 40% of its population smokers.

The anti-smoking legislation was signed by President Vladimir Putin in February as part of his plan to improve public health, raise life expectancy and promote economic growth.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said almost 400,000 Russians died from smoking-related diseases last year.

While experts say the law is nothing new to Russia, they stress that what is important is how it is applied.

"This law is fine, it complies with the framework convention," said Nikolai Gerasimenko, a former government health official.

"But the most important thing for now is its application."

The legislation will also restrict cigarette sales and ban advertising and sponsorship of events by tobacco companies.

There will be price increases too, says the BBC's Steven Rosenberg in Moscow.

He says you can buy packets of cigarettes in Russia for less than \$1 (60p).

From 1 June 2014, all cafes, bars, restaurants, hotels, shops, markets, shopping centres and long-distance journeys on ships and trains will become smoke free.

The sale of tobacco will also be prohibited at street kiosks and minimum prices will be set for cigarettes.

[More Europe stories](#)



[Apology to injured Turkish protesters \[/news/world-europe-22767622\]](#)

Turkey's Deputy PM Bulent Arinc apologises to protesters injured in initial protests opposing the demolition of an Istanbul park.

[Germany on alert as floods go north \[/news/world-europe-22770876\]](#)

[IMF urges France to reform economy \[/news/business-22771881\]](#)



BBC © 2013 The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. [Read more.](#)