

Smoking bans put to the vote

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A recent global study conducted by Synovate has revealed that out of 15 markets surveyed across the globe, South Africa is one of the least in favour of smoking bans. While the percentage of those pro smoking bans (72%) is fairly high, it is the Italians (96%), Thais (96%) and Taiwanese (93%) that are most supportive of wide-range smoking bans. Bulgaria and the Netherlands exhibit the most resistance to smoking bans, gathering 63% and 64% yes votes for the bans respectively. Globally this figure stands at 80%.

Just over two thirds of South Africans surveyed believe that its OK to have smoking in public establishments as long as there is adequate ventilation and/or designated spaces away for those who do not smoke.

Across the markets, those in favour of the bans believe that these bans will have a positive influence on public health. Those not in support of the bans think that they are just another way for government to interfere in its citizens' private lives.

Twenty six percent of South Africans regard themselves as regular smokers, compared to the global average of 31% across the 15 markets surveyed. Slovakia had the highest percentage of regular smokers (50%) followed by 47% of Bulgarians and 41% of Russians. On the other end of the spectrum, Singapore reported only 13% of regular smokers.

Although pubs in many countries around the world have started retiring their ashtrays, other businesses, such as airlines, have started looking into opportunities presented by catering to a smokers' market. Seventeen percent of respondents interviewed globally agreed that they would pay extra to fly on a smoker-friendly airline – an insight that comes in handy for Germany's soon-to-launch Smintair, the world's first airline promising to re-instate the liberty of smoking in all seats.

Synovate's smoking ban study polled over 8 500 respondents in South Africa, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Korea, the Netherlands, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

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