

# Prevalence of tobacco and e-cigarette use in young people in the WHO European Region

## > OVERVIEW

> Worldwide, nearly 44 million young people aged 13–15 years (about 12%) use some form of tobacco. The figure in the WHO European Region is 3.9 million (12.6%)<sup>(1)</sup> (Fig. 1).

> The rate of tobacco use among boys aged 13–15 in the WHO European Region is 13.8%, which is equivalent to 2.2 million. The rate of tobacco use among girls aged 13–15 in the WHO European Region is 11.5%, which is equivalent to 1.7 million. This is below the global average for boys (16%) and above for girls (8%) (Fig. 2).

> Rates among boys and girls in the Region are similar (13.8% in boys and 11.5% in girls), but in four other WHO regions<sup>1</sup> the rate of tobacco use in girls is on average 1.5–3.5 times lower than in boys.

> Using available data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) and the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey, WHO estimates that 500 000 (1.5%) of the Region's population aged 13–15 use smokeless tobacco products (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1. Estimated number of current tobacco users, ages 13–15 years, 2018

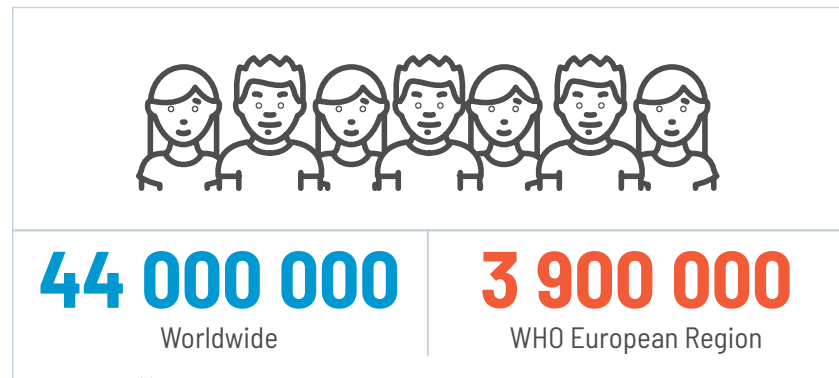


Fig. 2. Estimated number of current tobacco users, ages 13–15 years, by sex, WHO European Region, 2018

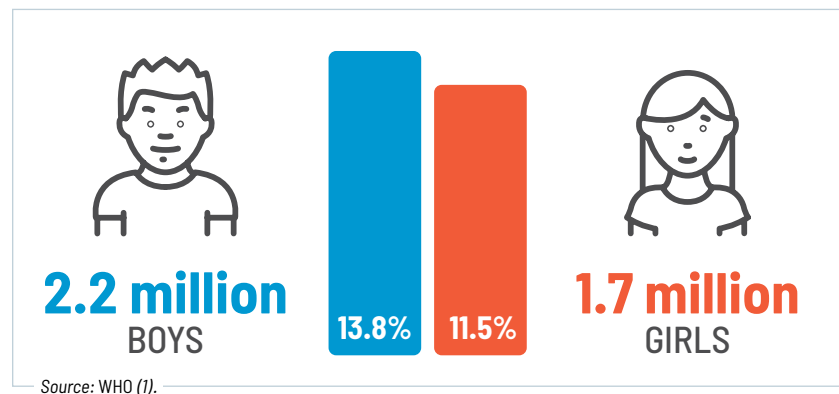
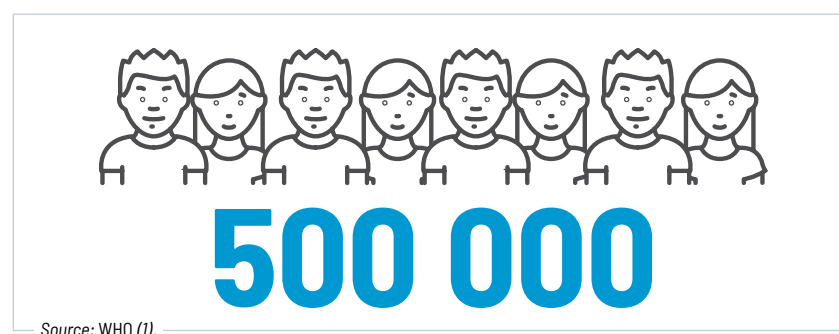


Fig. 3. Estimated number of current smokeless tobacco users, ages 13–15 years, WHO European Region, 2018

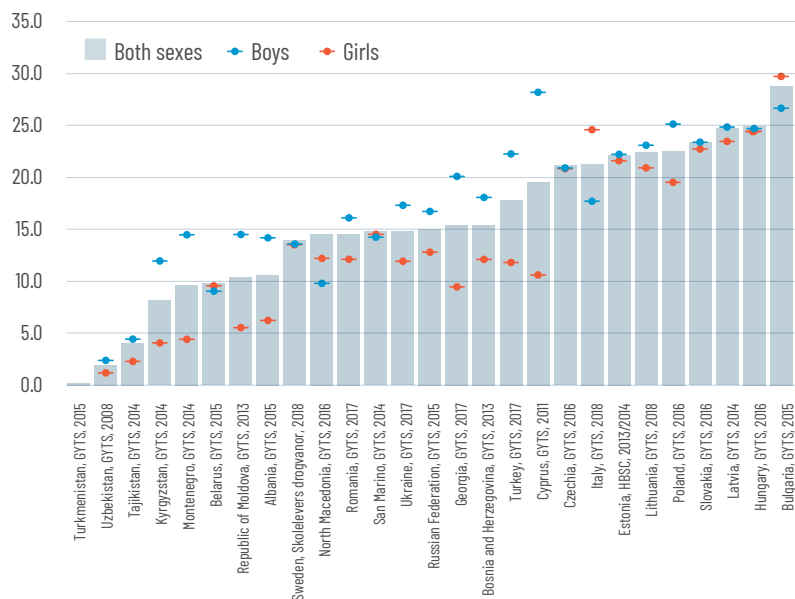


<sup>1</sup> WHO African Region, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, WHO South East Asian Region and WHO Western Pacific Region.

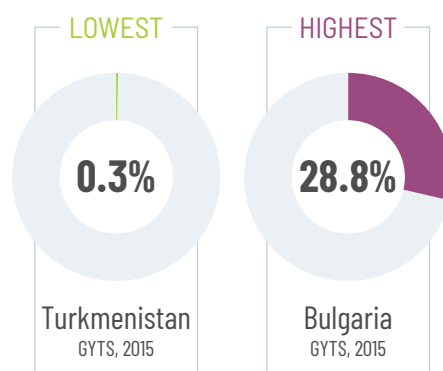
## TOBACCO USE



Fig. 4. Current tobacco use among young people from the most recent survey data available (%)



Twenty-seven countries of the Region have reported rates of **current tobacco use** in 13–15-year-olds in their most recent national surveys. Analysis shows that rates vary from as low as 0.3% in Turkmenistan (2015) to as high as 28.8% in Bulgaria (2015) (Fig. 4). Rates of current tobacco use in boys vary from 0.2% in Turkmenistan to 28.7% in Cyprus, and among girls from 0.4% in Turkmenistan to 30.1% in Bulgaria (2).



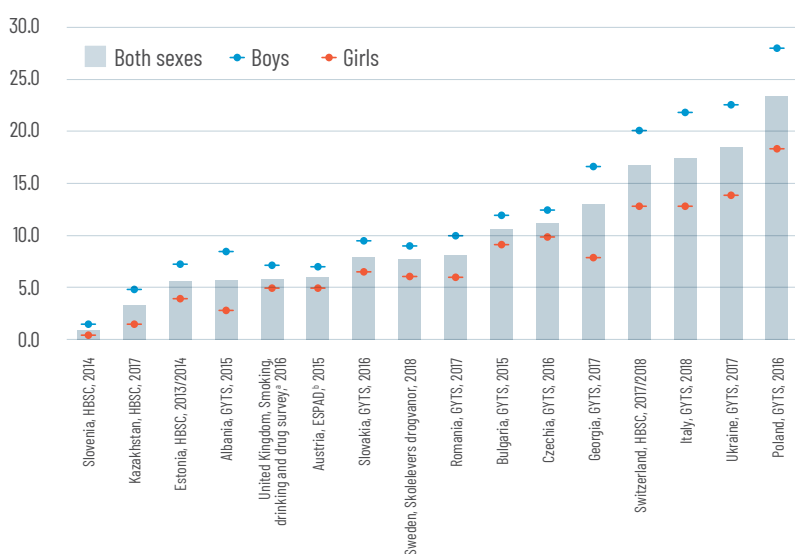
Source: WHO (2).

The most recent national surveys suggest that in 10 of 27 countries of the Region in which data on tobacco use are reported, the rates of current tobacco use among girls are similar to or higher than rates among boys.

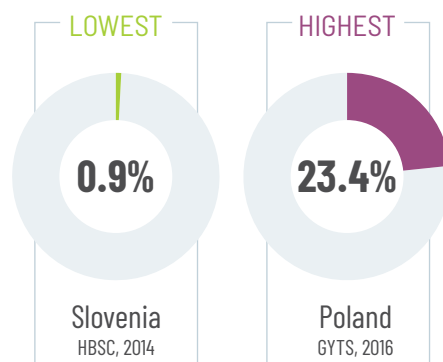
## E-CIGARETTE USE



Fig. 5. Current e-cigarette use prevalence from the most recent national survey data (%)



National surveys show that the rates vary from 0.9% in Slovenia (2014) to 23.4% in Poland (2016) (Fig. 5).

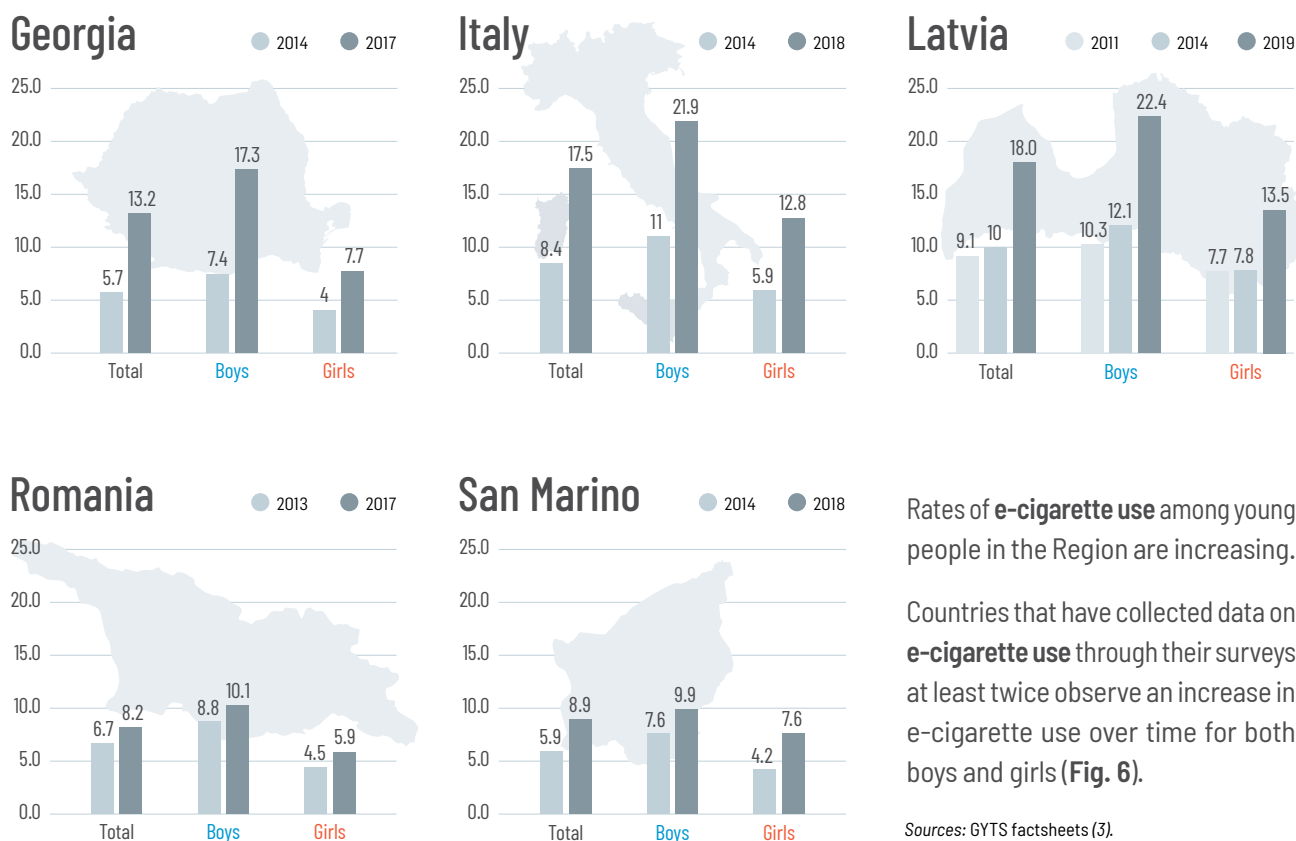


Source: WHO (2).

\* Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England.  
 † European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

## > E-CIGARETTE USE PREVALENCE OVER TIME

Fig. 6. E-cigarette use prevalence over time in selected countries of the WHO European Region, GYTS, various years (%)



Rates of **e-cigarette use** among young people in the Region are increasing.

Countries that have collected data on **e-cigarette use** through their surveys at least twice observe an increase in e-cigarette use over time for both boys and girls (Fig. 6).

Sources: GYTS factsheets (3).



## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is a highly effective regulatory framework but is underutilized in the Region. Member States should aim to fully implement all measures that fall within the scope of the WHO FCTC.

Countries should consider more comprehensive regulations on novel tobacco products, including ENDS, ENNDS and HTPs,<sup>2</sup> a gender-sensitive approach, and a focus on the social determinants that predispose children from socially disadvantaged groups to tobacco-related harm.

### REFERENCES<sup>3</sup>

1. WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000–2025, third edition. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 (<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/who-global-report-on-trends-in-prevalence-of-tobacco-use-2000-2025-third-edition>).
2. WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2019. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 ([https://www.who.int/tobacco/global\\_report/en/](https://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/en/)).
3. Global Tobacco Surveillance System Data (GTSSData). Fact sheets. In: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [website]. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; undated (<https://nccd.cdc.gov/GTSSDataSurveyResources/Ancillary/DataReports.aspx?CAID=1>).

<sup>2</sup> ENDS: electronic nicotine delivery systems; ENNDS: electronic non-nicotine delivery systems; HTPs: heated tobacco products.

<sup>3</sup> Weblinks accessed 10 March 2020.