4 August 2017 - The results of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) recently released in Ukraine reveal a 20 % reduction in smokers over the past 7 years. Following WHO recommendations, Ukraine has strengthened its anti-tobacco legislation resulting in this reduction in the proportion of the population smoking.

At the launch of the GATS results, Dr Marthe Everard, WHO Representative and Head of the WHO Country Office in Ukraine noted: "Ukraine ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2006, and since then tobacco control in the country has been strengthened. This has helped to achieve the significant reduction in tobacco use. However, a lot of work still needs to be done. All tobacco control stakeholders - the Government, politicians, experts, scientists, civil society activists - should strengthen and join up their efforts. " She also added that using the GATS framework helps the country identify and understand the outstanding problems in further reducing the number of smokers.

Dr. Gauden Galea, Director of the Division of Noncommunicable Diseases and Life-course at the WHO Regional Office for Europe noted that Ukraine has made progress, but still needs to focus on fully implementing the WHO FCTC: "Globally more than 7 million people die from smoking-related illnesses every year and tobacco use across the WHO European Region and in Ukraine remains too high. Most of these deaths can and should be prevented through effective tobacco control. Countries need to reduce the availability of tobacco products, increase their price and restrict their marketing. "

Study results show that fewer men smoke

Between 2010 and 2017, there has been a 20% relative reduction in the proportion of the population who smokes tobacco daily. This is largely due to a reduction in smoking among men, as there were no significant reductions seen in the proportion of women who smoke. In 2017 a total of, 7.2 million adult Ukrainians smoke daily (35.9% of all adult men and 7.0% of all adult women).

"Comparison of findings from the 2010 and 2017 surveys show a beneficial impact of Ukraine’s tobacco control across many of the indicators measured: the percentage of those who were exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke at home, in the workplace and in public has reduced, as has the proportion of the population who have been exposed to tobacco promotion through marketing of tobacco products; prices for tobacco products has increased significantly, as has people’s awareness of the harms of tobacco use. "

The survey also shows that there are areas without progress. Fewer adults are considering quitting smoking, which might be linked to a decrease in the number who reports having been exposed to anti-tobacco advertising. Coupled with the fact that smoking in public and tobacco advertising is still seen in Ukraine despite it being banned.

Following WHO guidelines

Results of GATS 2017 will be used to develop Ukraine's tobacco control policy further to fulfill the requirements of the WHO FCTC. Areas for urgent attention include:

- using legislation to strengthen compliance with existing policy, in particular regarding the ban on smoking in public places and on the marketing of tobacco products;
- providing access to free or affordable services to support people to quit using tobacco;
- strengthening measures warning people of the risks of tobacco use;
- and maintaining the regular increases in the price of tobacco products through effective tobacco tax increase

Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2017- Ukraine - Executive summary
http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/ukraine/publications3/global-adult-tobacco-survey-ukraine-2017

The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Fact sheet: Ukraine 2017
http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/ukraine/publications3/global-adult-tobacco-survey-gats-fact-sheet-ukraine-2017

Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Comparison fact sheet: Ukraine 2010 and 2017
http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/ukraine/publications3/global-adult-tobacco-survey-gats-comparison-fact-sheet-ukraine-2010-and-2017