



Based on information provided by the Latvian Ministry of Economics.

GOVERNMENT TAKES FIRM ACTION AGAINST FRAUD IN OLD RIGA BARS AND CLUBS

As of October 3, strict new regulations have come into effect to put an end to fraud against tourists and other customers in Latvian night clubs, bars and other entertainment establishments.

Minister of Economics Artis Kampars said: *“From now on dishonest bar owners in Old Riga will have a hard life because we have enacted harsh new sanctions against this type of reprehensible activity. The new regulations mean one thing – if the police establish that a bar repeatedly defrauds tourists, then that bar will lose its alcohol license and no new bar can be opened in that location. I hope that this powerful offensive against dishonest businesses will finally put an end to this serious tourist problem and will rehabilitate the reputation of Old Riga.”*

In order to restrict the activities of fraudulent entertainment businesses at a specific location, but not limit property owners' rights to lease or otherwise make use of premises for business purposes, the Licensing Commission would annul the special license allowing a specific type of activity. In other words, a bar, club or other entertainment establishment found guilty of violations, would not receive an alcohol license and be allowed to resume its activities under a new name. Until now, owners of blacklisted or otherwise discredited bars simply changed the name of the bar and resumed their fraudulent activities.

The new regulation is expected to address all types of credit card fraud and was strongly supported by the Expert Commission of the Latvian Tourism Consultative Council. The Council was established to address tourist safety issues and includes representatives from the Latvian Foreign Ministry, Finance Ministry, Latvian Hotel and Restaurant Association, Consumer Protection Centre, the Riga City Council, as well as municipal and state police.

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