The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Smoking Ban Costs Russian Cafes 20% of Revenues, Report Says

June 24, 2014



A ban on smoking inside all cafes, restaurants, bars and nightclubs came into force across Russia on June 1.

In the weeks since Russia's ban on smoking in eateries went into effect at the start of this month, restaurant and bar revenues have dropped by up to 20 percent, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

Cafes and bars were hit the hardest, as many of their former patrons began skirting the places where they had once liked to chat with friends over espressos or beers and a smoke, said Igor Bukharov, head of the Russian Restaurateurs and Hoteliers Federation, Izvestia reported.

Overall, the sales volume at restaurants, bars and cafes in the capital has dropped by between 15 to 20 percent in a decline that Bukharov called "very serious," Izvestia reported.
The numbers did not include losses recorded by nightclubs, he was quoted as saying.

"Our colleagues in Europe said that during the first year, when a [smoking] ban takes effect, declines are very serious," Bukharov said, Izvestia reported. "For pubs, for instance, it

reaches 30 percent. Later, clients return, having gotten used to the ban. But by that time, some of the restaurants have gone bankrupt."

European statistics may not apply to Russia, he added, because the country has a higher percentage of smokers and fewer restaurants, Izvestia reported.

Yevgeny Kogan, owner of the Cofein, or "Caffeine," cafe chain and Tamara Shesterina, director of the Shokoladnitsa coffee shop chain, confirmed that sales had declined, but said that the drop was closer to 10 percent than to 20 percent, Izvestia reported.

Kogan said that sales drops are likely to reach 15 percent before they rebound, Izvestia reported.

See also:

[Anti-Smoking Movement Raids Moscow Train Station]

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