

Russia's Alcohol Imports Hit By Excise Stamp Shortage

October 27, 2016



Vedomosti

Alcohol imports, an industry only beginning to recover after a record-shattering collapse in 2015, have once again fallen in the third quarter of 2016, the Kommersant newspaper [reported](#).

Importers blame the drop in imports on a shortage of the new form of excise stamp, which they were supposed to begin receiving on July 1. However, bureaucratic issues delayed the distribution of the stamps until late summer.

Alcohol imports grew in the first quarter of 2016 due to a strengthening of the ruble. However, the excise stamp issue is taking its toll: in the third quarter, imports of rum and whiskey have fallen by 61.4 percent (to 0.54 million liters) and 41 percent (to 4.87 million liters). Imports of table wine and sparkling wine have also fallen by 25.6 percent (to 38.74 million liters) and 13.4 percent (to 6.54 million liters), respectively. Imports of vermouth and flavored wines decreased to 2.23 million liters.

Not all companies were effected equally. Diageo, Bacardi, and Pernod Ricard are weathering the situation better than many Russian importers because they have a smaller assortment of goods. As a result, “they bought up more of the old type of excise stamp for their production and built up large stocks that helped them weather the third quarter without losses,” a manager of one of the distributor companies told Kommersant.

All alcohol categories are expected to experience growth in the fourth quarter. Alcohol market analyst Vadim Drobiz believes that, ultimately, the volume of imports in 2016 will be roughly the same as in 2015.

Original url:

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