

‘POINTLESS PAPERWORK’ OR NECESSARY? MIXED VIEWS OVER GERMANY’S NEW ‘RECEIPT OBLIGATION’

Fines not planned for retailers

At a medieval Christmas market in Dresden, which is still open in the first days of January, the "Bonpflicht" is not yet in force.

Managing director Henri Bibow emphasizes that he has nothing against the regulation. But it is particularly difficult to conceal the new cash registers so they don't disturb the market's medieval theme.

A market trader who runs several stands there even considers the obligation to offer receipt to be "impossible". Up to 18,000 people have visited the market. "It's impossible to hand over a receipt for a glass of mulled wine. We need a special permit (of exemption)."

Whether a special permit is issued or not, the odd trader who doesn't comply with the new law will probably go unnoticed – at least for now.

"There are no plans for tax officials to go out now and check retailers in the field," the chairman of the German Tax Union, Thomas Eigenthaler, recently told the "Westfalen-Blatt".

Fines against traders are not planned either. So what can happen if a trader is caught not issuing receipts? Perhaps the tax office will just take a closer look at the tax return and consequences may or may not come later.