

NO MORE SEGWAY TOURS IN THE PRAGUE CITY CENTER?



battle.

After receiving numerous complaints and the occurrence of many accidents, it was decided to stop the usage of Segway vehicles in the historic city center of the Czech capital. The Prague City Hall councilors arrived at the unanimous decision after the May 30 incident wherein a user of a Segway suffered a concussion in a collision with a tram. Segway tours operators get ready for a legal

Over the years, more and more tourists started zipping along the Letna Park pedestrian walkways and sidewalks to Prague Castle enjoying their time in the city with the Segway tours. **They however contributed to an increase in complaints and accidents.**

Prior to the traffic legislation changes, there was no differentiation between pedestrians and Segway users. However, when the ban comes into effect, Segways will disappear from the city center areas including Mala Strana, Hradcany, and the Old Town, which are the most popular places for tourists visiting Prague.

The new legislation bans the use of Segway vehicles on the sidewalks, bike paths, residential areas, and pedestrian walkways in Prague's Heritage Reservation zone. However, Czech and Prague police is allowed to use the vehicles. Segway tours are also banned in specific areas, such as Namesti Miru, outside the historic area because of their nuisance caused by them.

Though the councilors had originally conceived three options, they were not considered during the discussions.

Segway tours operators, who were worried that the ban would force them out of their business, hoped that the authorities would allow the use of Segways in certain street corridors such as Vltava embankments or those leading to Letna Park.

Zuzana Eliasova of Segway Operators Association said that legal options would be explored if the authorities decide to go ahead with the ban. In another interview, she said that **the implementation of the ban would wipe out the operators' businesses as tourists don't want to ride Segways in residential areas outside the city.**

The problem is that users of Segway vehicles cannot ride on the road like cyclists. This is because many of them are novices and, therefore, present greater risks.

According to Deputy Mayor, Petr Dolinek, the ban on Segway tours has become essential in view of the dangers the users pose to the pedestrians. He said that the recent accident gives a clear indication as regards the seriousness of the situation. On the issue of Segway operators losing their business, the deputy mayor said that the city is prepared to fight a legal battle, if required.

The city districts have 15 days' time to independently make their recommendations. The final vote on the ban of Segways in the city center would be taken this month.

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