

Christmas markets in the Moravian-Silesian region – safe or not?

Christmas markets are traditionally associated with the sale of a variety of specialties ranging from sausage-meat, potato pancakes, Slovak specialty „halušky“, burgers, to pancakes, donuts and other sweets. There is also grog, mulled wine, punch or mead.

In this pre-Christmas season, the Regional Public Health Authority of the Moravian-Silesian Region, based in Ostrava, regularly checks the conditions for the preparation and sale of refreshments. This year has audited the stands in all the cities in the region and has carried out more than 50 inspections.

The inspections were focused on the observance of personal and operational hygiene, the consumption and storage temperature of food and meals, as well as the labeling of allergens and the origin of goods. Checks also included monitoring whether alcoholic beverages are sold at all booths with information that alcoholic beverages are not sold to people under the age of 18. The aim of this action was to verify whether suitable conditions for the preparation of the assortment, in particular sufficient work areas, refrigeration facilities, and staff availability of handwashing facilities were created in the stands.

After evaluating the results of inspections, it can be stated that most operators comply with the rules. Market organizers already know that access to a drinking water source and independent hygienic facilities must be ensured for stallions.

In several cases, however, more serious shortcomings were found, such as storing potato dough in a plastic bucket of building material, failure to provide evidence of origin of dough, storage of raw materials at inappropriate temperature, non-labeling of allergens, non-compliance with operational cleanliness. Operators were fined accordingly.

It is important to remember that compliance with basic hygiene rules is essential to ensure that snacks prepared in stalls are safe and do not cause unpleasant gastric problems for consumers.

