

Duma names locations of gambling zones

Moscow – The committee on economic policy under the State Duma lower house of the Russian parliament recommend the house to approve the second reading of the amendments to the gambling bill, specifying the locations of gambling zones.

The gambling zones will be located in the Kaliningrad region, the Altai republic, the Maritime territory and on the borders of the Rostov region and the Krasnodar territory.

The presidential bill whose first reading was approved by the State Duma on November 15, envisions establishment of a new regime of state regulation of gambling business.

It also stipulates that the country cannot have more than four gambling zones functioning simultaneously in its territory.

The gambling zones will be of two types – „residential“ and „special“ zones. In a residential zone, a casino should be allotted no less than 800 square meters and 100 square meters for gambling machines, while „special“ gambling zones should be located beyond residential areas.

A gambling center is authorized to begin activities, provided it is given a special license issued for a term of five years. The casino bill also envisages certain restrictions on casino activities and bans underage persons from gambling.

Only Russian juridical entities backed by non- governmental and non -municipal juridical entities with the assets worth no less than 600 million roubles may organize gambling centers in Russia, the bill says. All the gambling institutions that do not comply with the new bill should be closed as of July 1, 2007. All the casinos that conform to the bill may continue activities on the Russian territory without the special

license until January 1, 2009.

President Vladimir Putin ordered lawmakers and the Cabinet to put an end to the mushrooming gaming machines and gaming halls in the country after a televised interview with Russian citizens in September 2005.

Putin, in fact, implemented his instruction himself, by submitting a new bill on gambling to the State Duma on October 6. The document sets tough rules, tested in many countries, aimed at the maximum weakening of the negative social consequences of this business and its decriminalization.