Criminality in Thessaloniki

Each one of us some day was a Univerity student or a tourist in a city of our country or abroad. The first thing that concerns us is accommodation. As students it is important to live near the University and as tourists we look for a place near the city center to have access to a lot of sights, avoiding long distances. In many cases, though, we forget to check the criminality rates of the place we are about to live. For example, I was born in Larisa and I will study at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, so I search for accommodation via Internet. I have found a very nice renovated and affordable place, located at the Central Train Station of Thessaloniki (OSE). OSE is near the city center and close to the University on foot so theoretically it could be a very good option. Unfortunately, things are not so simple!

In every city, especially in big cities like Thessaloniki and Athens there is extensive criminality sometimes gathered in specific spots. These spots stand for Red Regions. In the Red Regions a large variety of crimes take place from smuggling of cigarettes and shoes to traffic of drugs and robberies, prostitution and crimes among cartels. In Thessaloniki (Skg) there are some Red Regions that is good for a student or a tourist to know before booking a place to stay and visiting the city.

Red Regions

# CITY CENTER

The city center is divided into parts. If we consider that the center is the Aristotle Square- Statue of Venizelos- Roman Market, the eastern part consists of Kamara-Rotonta- Navarinou Square and the western of Vardaris- Monastiriou Street (OSE)- Giannitson Street- Koletti Street. All these places are characterized as Red Regions as many types of criminality appear there.

More specifically, to start with the eastern part where Universities are located, before the Revocation of the University’s Asylum, students every day had to deal with drug dealers and dopers. Apart from that, there were lots of robberies and attacks to steal money or mobile phones, even rapes in the University Campus near the Library. After the Revocation and with the support of the police, students and Academic staff are safer. The next attraction of criminality is Kamara- Rotonta- Navarinou Square in which there are also drug dealers and dopers, many people had their purse stolen or their bag grabbed at night. Although, it is important to mention that these places are central, mainly visited by students and other people. This explanation means that even if there is criminality, this does not affect people. We all walk through these streets but we watch out a little bit more!

In the central part of Thessaloniki, namely Aristotle Square- Statue of Venizelos- Roman Market, there is the claimed criminality of smuggling and pilfering. More specifically, groups of foreigners in the intersection of Aristotle Street and Egnatia Street sell illegal cigarettes and counterfeit products, while in some cases at crowded bus stops, people get their personal valuable stuff stolen. All these happen 100-200 meters away from the Police Station “Lefkos Pyrgos”. Finally, illegals and migrants gather at the Statue of Venizelos and generally at Roman Market while some time appeared cases of trafficking there.

Regarding the western part of the city center where Vardaris- Central Train Station (OSE) are placed, things get worse. This Red Region has turned into a ghetto of illegals who do not hesitate to do armed attacks to shops, steal passengers and kill others from another cartels. There are not few incidents like these! Even if that location has new-built apartments, near the city center, it is totally inappropriate for staying. In the west there are also the Streets Giannitson and Koletti where the Mall “One Salonica” is located. At night this area changes its image as prostitutes and transgender people work there, on the streets. In the morning it is a typical region but at night it would be nice to avoid going there.

# Suburbs

Except for the city center, there is an increase in the robberies and burglaries at Ampelokipous, Neapoli, Toumpa, regions in the suburbs of Thessaloniki. Also, in some other more rich areas the criminality rates remain standard such as in Kalamaria, Pefka, Panorama and Retziki. In these areas there is a small increase in stolen cars.

# Street Crimes

A large raise has happened in pilfering and street crimes eliminating the armed incidents. Based on the information gained by the police, immigrants play a vital role in this increase. The 70% of these crimes were occurred by illegals from Algeria, Marocco and Libya while the last three months there is an 80% increase in stolen mobile phones and purses in buses, crowded stores and streets. Sometimes groups of Bulgarian women or men from the regions mentioned above even Greeks, take advantage of crowded places and do their job without any notice. The most dangerous bus stops are from the Square of Eleftheria to White Tower taking Mitropoleos Street (bus numbers 3K, 6,5,39,33,12), also from the Central Train Station to the bus stop AHEPA taking Egnatia Street (bus numbers 14,10,31,2Κ,11).

# Sexual Harassment

Closing the part of criminality we could not omit the sexual harassments that students and women usually experience. When saying sexual harassment is not only rapes but also verbal violence, gestures, grope and the touch of men’s sexual organs at women’s rump when being in crowded places. All these may seem minor things and they are always not mentioned in the police to be included in criminality rates. Although, this is a reality especially in buses, so every time a girl notices that someone is close to her in the behind have in mind that this may not happen because of the crowd. Change sit or ask him to go back. Unfortunately, in 2019 there are men 30,40,50,70 years old who do this repeatedly and they are out of suspicion. Do not allow this happen!