
Leaflet

Information on attempted fraud related to the formation of companies

To the founders of German limited liability companies (GmbH): Beware of fraudulent invoices after the formation of your company

The formation of a German limited liability company (GmbH) is registered in the local commercial register (district court). The registration is published on the internet and accessible to everyone free of charge. Time and again, fraudsters use this information to harm inexperienced founders.

For instance, they falsify invoices from public authorities which they then send to the published address of the newly formed company. They charge, for example, registration fees of the court or other alleged formation costs. These falsified invoices can be designed very cleverly and appear to be authentic, for example by (illicitly) using the coat of arms of the relevant Federal State or fake official seals.

In most cases, negative consequences are announced in the event of non-payment, such as the omission of complete registration in the commercial register.

The inclusion of a pre-filled transfer order with »unsuspicious« account details in the invoice does not exclude an attempt to commit fraud.

The same also applies to later amendments to your company that are submitted for registration in the commercial register.

Therefore, please check incoming invoices carefully to establish authenticity; in cases of doubt, do not hesitate to contact your notary.

Registration in other »registers«

In some cases, once your company's formation has been published, you may receive offers to register your company in additional »registers«, books or websites – registrations that are unnecessary and ineffective, and usually require the upfront payment of a (considerable) fee.

Please carefully check the actual added value of such offers for your company. If you have any questions regarding the possibly feigned legal necessity of a registration, again, please do not hesitate to contact your notary.

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