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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Retirement Age Won't Go Up Yet

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Putin promised to leave the pension age alone for at least five years. **Igor Tabakov**

TVER — The government is not planning to increase the pension age in the country, but could return for another look in five to 15 years, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Monday during a meeting with a working group from the Tver Excavator company.

"It is my deep conviction that today and for the near perspective we should not [raise the pension age]," Putin said. "There is no necessity for increasing the pension age today. But in five, 10, 15 years we need to look at reality, the reality of our life," the prime minister said.

Many countries in Europe are actually taking the path of increasing pensions, Putin noted. Russia has ample means for padding out its own pension fund, he said, with other means such as improving tax collections, increasing the efficiency of pension-system functionality, and increasing labor productivity.

In Europe the average lifespan is greater, Putin pointed out. "We can't separate retirement from life expectancy in this country," he said.

The retirement age in Russia is much lower than in other European countries, RIA-Novosti notes. The majority of men are entitled to retire at 60 and women at 55. Miners, lumberjacks, pilots, cosmonauts as well as a dozen other specialists are entitled to retire earlier still. Given that the average life expectancy for Russian men is about 63 years, raising the retirement age would mean that many of them would not live to receive it.

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