The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Some in Duma Irked After Record Session

By Alexandra Odynova

July 10, 2011



United Russia oversaw the approval of a record 264 federal laws and three constitutional amendments during the State Duma's spring session, which wound up Friday, but the other three parliamentary factions complained that their input had been all but ignored.

The number of bills approved over the past seven months topped the previous record of 249 bills set during last year's spring session.

The ruling United Russia party appeared content with the results, with the head of its faction, Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov, praising "the constructive discussions" and his first deputy, Tatyana Yakovleva, declaring the spring session "significant," the party's web site reported.

But the other factions complained that United Russia's overwhelming majority had blocked their initiatives. Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov even spoke about "the session of missed opportunities," Vesti state television reported.

A Just Russia head Sergei Mironov said the "heavy spirit of stagnation" prevailed in the Duma.

Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, called the session "fruitful" but said while many laws have been passed, "90 percent don't work," RIA-Novosti reported.

"They lie on the shelves, while at the local level, administrations have their own laws," Zhirinovsky said. He did not elaborate.

But he could have been referring to legislation meant to ease penalties for economic crimes. The law, the third installment in a Kremlin bid to improve the economic climate, is often ignored or sidestepped on technicalities by prosecutors and judges on the ground, news reports say.

The most discussed legislation of the spring session was the law on police reform, introduced by the Kremlin last year and passed in January. In a rare move, the bill was subject to open public discussion, although only a modest number of suggestions found their way into the text approved by the Duma.

In foreign affairs, the Duma ratified in January the landmark New START nuclear arms reduction pact with the United States.

The deputies also approved a system of color-coded terrorism alerts similar to the one abandoned recently by Washington.

The fall session, the last before the Duma vote in December, opens in September.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/07/10/some-in-duma-irked-after-record-session-a8152