

Canada Cautions Gay Travelers to St. Petersburg

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The  Moscow Times

Canada has issued a warning to gay travelers visiting St. Petersburg, after the city's passing of a law mandating fines for the promotion of homosexual behavior, Canadian news site National Post reported.

The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs has updated the description of Russia on its website with an advisory recommending that gay travelers not show affection on the streets and detailing the possible legal consequences of breaking the new law.

"Canadians are advised to avoid displaying affection in public, as homosexuals can be targets of violence," the advisory said. "Public actions (including dissemination of information, statements, displays or conspicuous behavior) contradicting or appearing to contradict this law may lead to arrest, prosecution and the imposition of a fine."

The warning also noted the existence of similar policies in Ryazan, Arkhangelsk and Kostroma.

The St. Petersburg city legislature passed a law earlier this month instituting fines of 5,000 rubles (\$171) to 500,000 rubles for anyone promoting pedophilia or homosexual relationships in the company of children, provoking outcry among gay-rights activists and Western governments and legislators.

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