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United Russia Deputy Apologizes Again

By The Moscow Times

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United Russia Deputy Ilya Kostunov said in an interview that "the dumbest [State Duma] deputy is smarter than the average citizen." He later apologized on Twitter, though.

In the interview with Public Post published on Tuesday, Kostunov, a first-term deputy and a former commissar with the pro-Kremlin youth movement Nashi, explained why being a deputy appealed to him.

"It's not that I think it's the creme de la creme here, but there are really smart people here, from whom one can learn," he said, referring to his Duma colleagues.

In a Twitter message, he apologized for earlier comments in the interview.

"I apologize for the phrase about 'the average citizen' and deputies. I will be more careful from now on," he said Tuesday.

Kostunov later added that his words had been deliberately taken out of context in a long

informal interview, as revenge for his complaint against prominent journalist Vladimir Pozner.

In October, Kostunov sent a written complaint to Channel One's head, Konstantin Ernst, asking him to fire Pozner for saying there was no rule of law in Russia. Kostunov later apologized for that as well.

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