The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Puts OGP Entry on Hold

By The Moscow Times

May 20, 2013



President Vladimir Putin has postponed Russia's entry into the Open Government Partnership planned for the second half of this year, a news report said Monday.

"We are not talking about winding up plans to join, but corrections in timing and the scale of participation are possible," presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Kommersant.

OGP is an international partnership with over 50 member states aimed at promoting human rights, budget transparency and fighting corruption.

In December, Medvedev had confirmed plans to join the partnership in Sept. 2013 noting that Russia needs membership for its own benefit, and not for the sake of becoming "part of a global shindig".

Open Government Minister Mikhail Abyzov said Russia will join the organization if the latter implements the newcomer's recommendations, namely, linking transparency assessments provided by the OGP to investment ratings, Kommersant said.

Furthermore, Russia proposes expanding the OGP's format, increasing the number of member and observer states, as well as changing the principles of financing the organization.

Postponing Russia's entry will damage the country's reputation and demonstrate the inconsistency of its actions, experts say.

Head of the "Information Culture" NGO Ivan Begtin attributed the change of course to a new president and a new "agenda" in the Kremlin.

Meanwhile, OGP's independent coordinator Paul Maassen called Russia's decision "a missed opportunity for reformers" in his Twitter blog, while international transparency activist Helen Darbishire called Russia's withdrawal from the partnership "good news for the democracy club, but probably bad news for democracy".

Related articles:

- State-Funded Projects to Face Scrutiny by Independent Experts
- IT System Will Improve Utilities Sector Transparency
- Russians Dream of Joy and Life Without Putin

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/05/20/putin-puts-ogp-entry-on-hold-a24147