

# Small Telecom Operators May Lose Access to Information from Abroad

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 20, 2013

**The  Moscow Times**

The Communications and Press Ministry has proposed dividing Russian telecommunications operators into two categories and banning smaller ones from receiving Internet data from foreign IP addresses, sparking worries about state control over the Internet.

The idea will be brought up for discussion in the fall, ministry adviser Eldar Razroyev told Vedomosti on Tuesday.

To obtain the status of a large, "federal" network, an operator would have to have at least two powerful communication nodes in both the European and Asian parts of Russia, communications channels in all the regions and services in every city with more than 100,000 people. Other companies would not be able to receive data from non-Russian IP addresses.

Only the largest Russian operators such as MTS, VimpelCom, MegaFon and Rostelecom will be eligible to apply for a federal status, the head of a telecommunications company said.

Employees of telecom operators and analysts say the new concept may lead to several large companies monopolizing access to foreign information. Other observers worried that the measure could lead to a government-instituted firewall, like in China.

“Reducing the number of providers who have direct access to foreign communications channels simplifies government control over the Internet content flowing through them,” the telecommunications company head said.

Razroyev, however, denied the allegations and said that the new concept just created an incentive for operators to develop infrastructure in the regions.

Russia now has about 30 operators receiving data from abroad, the Communications and Press Ministry said.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/08/20/small-telecom-operators-may-lose-access-to-information-from-abroad-a26912>