

Organizations Fighting Illegal Migration Could Get State Support

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Instead of groups helping immigrants, nationalist organizations could benefit from the bill if adopted.

Andrei Makhonin

A bill submitted to the State Duma on Tuesday could add NGOs engaged in the fight with illegal immigration to the list of organizations that the government is authorized to support.

The law currently sanctions government aid for organizations involved in 12 areas of social work, such as disaster relief, legal education and cultivating patriotism. The support can include allocations of property, financial contributions, consulting, data support, and tax privileges.

Three deputies from the Liberal Democratic Party — Deputy Speaker Igor Lebedev, Yaroslav Nilov and Andrei Svintsov — have proposed adding a thirteenth group to the list: organizations that assist federal and local government in combating illegal immigration.

The immigrant population in Russia continues to rise each year, bringing with it the responsibility of providing work, housing and assistance during social, economic and cultural acclimation. Non-governmental organizations could be instrumental in facilitating this process, the deputies said, RIA Novosti reported.

The deputies believe that working with NGOs on immigration issues could also help reduce crime rates in Russia.

Yekaterina Lakhova, deputy head of the Duma's social and religious organizations committee, said Tuesday that the bill is unlikely to be adopted and added that any organization that helps immigrants adapt instead of struggling with them will be eligible for state support.

Lakhova, a United Russia party member, warned that adopting the bill could lead to a growth in the number of nationalist organizations and the "radicalization" of young people's attitudes.

Lebedev and Nilov submitted a bill in August calling for the automatic deportation of any foreigners found violating immigration regulations.

The number of immigrants residing illegally in Russia at any given moment varies between 3 million and 5 million, the Federal Migration Service told Kommersant Vlast in September.

The migration service believe that there are currently 11.2 million immigrants on Russian territory, making it the second most popular destination in the world for immigrants after the United States.

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