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Bill Drafted to Help Russians Block Spam Text Messages

By The Moscow Times

November 12, 2013

The Federation Council has drafted a bill to help Russians block unwanted commercial text messages to their cell phones, a news report said Tuesday.

The measures are modeled after the rules adopted by the Federal Communications Commission, or FCC, in the U.S. and similar regulations in other countries, said Ruslan Gattarov, one of the bill's authors and head of the council's information policy commission.

The bill would introduce a definition of spam text messages to Russia's communications law, Gattarov said, Interfax reported. Commercial messages would be allowed only if the cell service subscriber agrees to them, he said.

"The next step that we are working on now would be blocking spam messages via email," he added.

The FCC bans many commercial text messages, unless the recipient has previously agreed to receive them or the messages provide emergency notifications. Under FCC rules, senders of commercial messages must also clearly identify themselves, present an easy option for unsubscribing, and, in case of emails, contain a legitimate return address and the sender's postal address.

In addition, some U.S. cell service providers, such as AT&T, give their customers a chance to report any spam messages and promise to investigate. Others, such as T-Mobile, offer an option of filtering text messages sent from specific numbers.

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