The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Foreign Currency Bribes Could Receive Harsher Punishment

By The Moscow Times

December 18, 2013

Foreign currency makes bribes of large amounts easier, as they often hold more value than Russian banknotes. **Chris Potter**

A Liberal Democratic Party lawmaker has submitted a bill that proposes harsher sentences for those convicted of taking bribes in foreign currencies, versus those who take payment in rubles.

Sergei Ivanov explained his proposal by saying that the origin and transfers of foreign currencies were harder to track, and that paying bribes in foreign currencies was easier for criminals because foreign bank notes tend to take up less space than equivalent sums in rubles, Interfax reported. The largest bank note in Russian currency is 5,000 rubles, while the largest euro denomination is 500 (22,000 rubles). The largest U.S. bank note in use is $100 (3,200 rubles).

"This complicates solving the crime and impedes finding out and eliminating circumstances

that facilitated the commission of the crime," Ivanov said in an explanatory note to his bill submitted on Wednesday.

The bill of amendments to the Criminal Code would equate bribes paid in foreign currencies with bribery committed by an organized crime group or on a large scale, and would envisage similarly tougher sentences, Ivanov said.

The Criminal Code makes bribery punishable by a fine of 25 to 50 times the amount of the bribe or a prison term of up to three years, but large-scale bribes or those involving an organized crime group carry a fine of 70 to 90 times the amount of the bribe and up to 12 years in prison.

Ivanov made news thanks to another bill he submitted last spring, proposing to ban garlic from most private and public buildings as a health and social hazard. After appearing briefly on the Duma's website of pending legislation, the bill was taken down, and Ivanov said it had been an April Fools' joke.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/18/foreign-currency-bribes-could-receive-harsher-punishment-a30614