

Russia Bans Adoptions to Countries Where Gay Marriage Is Legal

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The government has ruled out adoption for unmarried people in countries where marriage is legal. **E. Razumny**

The Russian government has banned the adoption of Russian children by unmarried citizens in countries where same-sex marriage is recognized.

A decree signed by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and published on the government's website Thursday announced changes to a law on adoption enacted last July that banned the adoption of Russian children by same-sex couples.

Last summer's measure came at a time when certain Western countries were debating and later passing laws recognizing same-sex marriage.

Russia's law banning the promotion of non-traditional sexual relations to minors was passed around the same time and has generated negative attention in Europe and the United States,

where activists had called for boycotts of Russian vodka and the Sochi Olympics, and the new legislation is likely to further exacerbate anti-Russian attitudes among human rights activists.

An explanatory note accompanying the amendments said that the government had acted to protect adopted children "from possible unwanted influence such as artificial forcing of non-traditional sexual behavior and the suffering, complexes and stresses that, according to psychologists' studies, are often experienced by kids raised in same-sex families."

More than a dozen countries recognize gay marriages, including the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Spain, Canada, Norway, Sweden, New Zealand and parts of Britain.

Same-sex marriage is also legal in certain states of Mexico and the United States, as well as being recognized by the U.S. federal government.

Americans are already banned from adopting Russian children under a law that was introduced after the U.S. passed an act imposing sanctions on those accused of involvement in the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in 2009 and other human rights abuses.

Lawmakers including State Duma Deputy Yelena Mizulina, who supported the "gay propaganda" law and is head of the Duma's Committee for Family, Women and Children, earlier called for July's law to be expanded, arguing that children taken in by heterosexual parents could later be transferred to gay parents.

The changes to the adoption law also decrease the official time period for considering applications made by prospective parents from 15 to 10 days and eliminate the need for paperwork confirming that the sanitary conditions of the child's new home are up to standard.

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