

# Legislation Being Readied to Reduce Number of Foreign Films in Russian Cinemas

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The draft bill would introduce a 50-percent cap on the number of foreign films shown in Russian cinemas.

Russian lawmakers are putting the final touches to a draft bill that would introduce a 50-percent cap on the number of foreign films shown in Russian cinemas.

"We basically show American films that promote the stereotypes, national interests and values of the United States," United Russia party deputy Robert Schlegel, who penned the document, told Izvestia on Tuesday. "Many of these are low quality. Russia can produce its own films, which will be interesting to viewers."

The U.S. last week imposed asset bans and travel freezes on several Russian officials and businessmen following Russia's annexation of the Black Sea Crimea region from Ukraine, but Schlegel said the legislation is not linked to these events.

Leonid Levin, first deputy chairman of the State Duma's Information Policy Committee, warned that any cap on foreign films could compel more movie lovers to download pirate films.

Alexander Akopov, president of the Russian Television Academy, said that a cap on foreign films would be a bad idea as Russian directors may relax and fail produce their best work, leading to a dip in the quality of films produced in Russia.

Schlegel's draft bill, which will be examined by his party colleagues and submitted to the Duma within two weeks, is not the first attempt to reduce the number of foreign films shown in Russian cinemas. In February 2013, LDPR deputy Dmitry Litvintsev introduced a bill aimed at capping foreign films at 20 percent, but the Duma did not back the proposal.

Between January and November 2013, Russian films grossed almost 7.2 billion rubles (\$200 million), taking a 17.5 percent share of the overall market, Vedomosti reported in December.

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