

Mass Media Minister's Thesis Was Plagiarized, Online Group Says

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Communications and Mass Media Minister Nikolai Nikiforov, who is accused of plagiarism.

Large chunks of the doctoral thesis of Communications and Mass Media Minister Nikolai Nikiforov have been lifted from other sources, an online group devoted to exposing plagiarism has said.

The allegations of Nikiforov's plagiarism — whose appointment at the age of 29 as a federal minister in 2012 was welcomed by liberal online commentators — brought droves of visitors to the website of the Dissernet online group, its head Sergei Parkhomenko said Monday on his Facebook page.

"Our website is barely hanging in there. Some innumerable crowds of curious people have rushed to look at the wonder of wonders: a chock-full of stolen text dissertation of the young, high-tech and progressive communications minister of the Russian Federation, Nikolai Nikiforov," the Dissernet chief said.

He also called the dissertation a "shame" and a "classic picture of a made-to-order dissertation," while a commentator on Facebook expressed regret that "Nikiforov turned out to be like everybody else in the government — a crook."

Nikiforov's thesis for a Ph.D. in economics was marred by "copy-pastes of large chunks, for several pages on end, from half a dozen of various sources," Parkhomenko said. "And they are presented so as to look like the original text of the dissertation's author — no citations, no references, no quotation marks."

Parkhomenko also appealed to Nikiforov to annul his doctoral degree and take responsibility for the "mistake" that had hurt his reputation of an "educated, highly skilled professional who achieved recognition and success through his own efforts."

"Only you alone can defend your name, acknowledging your fault and asking to annul the thesis defense," Parkhomenko said.

The Communications Ministry dismissed the accusations as unfounded.

"We don't consider this as criticism," ministry spokeswoman Yekaterina Osadchaya said, Itar-Tass reported. "There is nothing to comment here, because borrowings can be found in any dissertation, and the analysis of the work was done automatically" by computer programs.

"This means that we are talking about the opinion of those who haven't even read the minister's work," she said.

Dissernet has unveiled massive intellectual fraud by top government official, including a [recent report](#) that 99.32 percent of the Kremlin children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov was plagiarized.

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