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Russia Launches First Criminal Case for Failing to Report Foreign Residency

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Russia launched the first criminal case against a Russian citizen for failing to report residency in Estonia.

Finally bringing down the hammer of justice on Russians who fail to report multiple state affiliations, the Investigative Committee launched the first criminal case against a Russian citizen for failing to report residency in Estonia.

The suspect, whose name was withheld, is a 51-year-old resident of northern Russia's Leningrad region who also obtained a residency permit in European Union member Estonia in 2011, but never reported it to the Russian government, investigators said Tuesday.

The man was busted recently trying to cross the Russian-Estonian border by car, the Investigative Committee said in a statement posted on its website.

Since October, failure to report a second passport or foreign residency permit has been punishable in Russia with up to 400 hours of community service or a fine of up to 200,000 rubles ($3,700).

However, offenders can get away with a fine of up to 1,000 rubles ($20) if they report themselves before the authorities expose them.

Up to 43,000 Russian citizens have been slapped with small fines for failing to report themselves by the Oct. 4 deadline, Kommersant said last week.

About 600,000 have reported a second passport or residency permit in time for the deadline, according to official figures.

Up to 10 million Russians have another passport or residency permit, according to some experts estimates. About 100,000 of those have Estonian passports, media in the Baltic country reported earlier this year.

Since 2004, dual citizens in Russia are banned from state service.

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