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New Russian Regulation Says Transvestite People Unfit to Drive

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Transgender people may no longer be allowed to drive cars in Russia.

Transvestite people may no longer be allowed to drive cars in Russia under new road safety regulations signed by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

A decree published on the government website earlier this month lists an array of health conditions that can disqualify someone from getting behind the wheel, among them "personality and behavioral disorders" listed in the World Health Organization's classification of health problems.

The sections in question — F60 to F69 — name transsexualism and transvestism, along with other "disorders of sexual preference," such as fetishism and voyeurism. "Disorders associated with sexual development and orientation" are also listed.

The new road safety rules are "aimed at reducing the death rate from traffic incidents" in the

country, said a government note accompanying the decree. It did not specify how being gender-queer could limit a person's ability to drive safely.

The Association of Russian Lawyers for Human Rights lambasted the new rules as violations of the Russian Constitution, saying in an online statement that the decree would discriminate against "all transgender people, bigender, asexuals, transvestites, cross-dressers [and] people who need a sex reassignment."

The statement added that well-known singers and comedians such as Verka Serduchka and parodist Alexander Peskov, who are male but dress up as women for their performances, would be affected by the new regulations.

Yelena Masyuk, a member of the Kremlin's human rights council, said in a statement Thursday that limiting an individual's right to drive based on gender identity or sexual preference represents a "possible injustice."

It remained unclear whether Russia would enforce the restrictions for individuals deemed to have "sexual disorders."

The World Health Organization may itself remove the section on transvestite individuals during a planned revision of its classification of health problems this year.

Amid international criticism for its listing of transvestite orientation as a "disorder," the World Health Organization said in a statement that it will review its section on "sexual disorders" to account for recent "advances in health-related knowledge."

The organization will offer recommendations for an update to its health problem classifications during an annual conference scheduled for May. The classifications were last revised in 1990.

Medvedev's decree also pronounced individuals with "psychiatric disorders," including schizophrenia, mental retardation and drug addiction, as unfit to drive in Russia. Gambling addicts could also be barred from driving, based on the World Health Organization classifications cited in the document.

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