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NBCUniversal Stops Broadcasting Pay Channels in Russia

By The Moscow Times

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The international channels division of U.S. mass media group NBCUniversal has decided to leave the Russian market after a law came into effect banning advertising on cable channels, a news report said Friday.

Since Jan. 1, pay-to-watch television channels have been barred from broadcasting advertisements in Russia. The widely censured bill raced through parliament last summer even as the heads of cable channels warned that it would put 150 channels on the brink of extinction.

"Due to the deterioration of the economic situation for our premium channels (Universal Channel and E! Entertainment Television) in Russia, Universal Networks International has decide to cease its activities on the Russian market," the company said in a statement received by news agency RIA Novosti.

Cable news channel CNN said in November that it too would pull out of Russia from Jan. 1.

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