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OSCE Slams New Russian Law on 'Undesirable Organizations' for Curbing Media Freedom

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The media freedom representative for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said Wednesday that a new Russian law banning "undesirable organizations" from the country will have a negative impact on media freedom.

The law, which was approved by both chambers of the Russian parliament this week, will allow the Russian government to declare foreign and international nongovernmental organizations "undesirable" and ban them from working in the country.

It will prohibit the work of foreign NGOs that are viewed as "a threat to the foundations of the constitutional system of the Russian Federation, its defense capabilities and its national security," according to the bill's text, published on the State Duma's website.

Specifically, it "prohibits Russian mass media and online portals to disseminate information materials produced by these organizations," the OSCE statement said in an online statement.

"The broad and imprecise wording of this legislation would impose serious restrictions on a wide array of important democratic rights, including freedom of expression and media freedom," the OSCE's media freedom representative Dunja Mijatovic was quoted as saying in the statement.

"I call on the president of the Russian Federation to veto this legislation in order to protect pluralistic debate," she said.

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