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Russian Alcohol Law Risks Taking Many Cleaning Products Off Shelves

By The Moscow Times

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The Russian market of cleaning products and household goods was worth 188.5 billion rubles ($3.8 billion) in 2014.

Major international companies are urging the Russian government to delay implementing new alcohol regulations that risk taking many everyday cleaning products off Russian shelves from the beginning of next month, news agency RBC reported Wednesday.

Amendments set to come into force on June 1 will require producers and retailers to receive a special license for products with an alcohol content of 0.5 percent or more, down from the previous threshold of 1.5 percent.

But it is not clear what this will mean for goods with an alcohol content of between 0.5 and 1.5 percent that were produced or imported before June 1. The law could potentially affect sales of liquid laundry detergents, fabric softeners, dish soap, cleaning products, air fresheners, shoe polish, furniture polish, insect repellants and moist towelettes, the Association

of Perfumery, Cosmetics and Household Chemistry Manufacturers wrote in a letter sent on May 14 to Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Khloponin, RBC reported, citing a copy of the letter.

"Due to the significant quantity of products like this (several tens of items valued in the billions of rubles), [we] have received numerous inquiries from producers, retailers and other market players," wrote the association, which includes among its members international producers such as Procter & Gamble.

In its letter to Khloponin, who oversees the alcohol market, the association requested that the government delay the amendments and clarify its policy on products imported before June 1.

The association confirmed the letter's authenticity to RBC and said that it was "in dialogue with the relevant government agencies," but declined to comment further.

Khloponin's spokesman told RBC that the deputy prime minister is aware of businesses' concerns and that the Federal Alcohol Market Regulatory Service will prepare a list of goods to be excluded from the regulation before the law goes into effect.

The Russian market of cleaning products and household goods was worth 188.5 billion rubles ($3.8 billion) in 2014, the report said, citing data from market intelligence firm Euromonitor International.

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