

Russian Lawmaker Wants Tougher Penalties for Bicycle Theft

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A Russian lawmaker wants to introduce legal amendments equating bicycle theft with car theft — a crime that could earn offenders up to five years behind bars, the Izvestia newspaper reported Monday.

Vladimir Petrov, a deputy in the Leningrad region legislative assembly, wants to change the language of the Russian Criminal Code that dictates punishment for stealing “automobiles and other means of transportation” by including the word “bicycle,” according to the Izvestia report.

Russian law does not currently treat bicycles as a means of transportation, according to an explanatory note to the bill, seen by Izvestia. Instead, stealing a bicycle is often treated as petty theft and carries a more lenient punishment, the report cited lawyers as saying.

Bicycle theft is currently growing at a rate of up to 20 percent per year in Russia, Petrov said, Izvestia reported.

“The increase in theft is linked to the development of bike lane infrastructure in Russian

cities, as well as to the appearance on the market of new exclusive bicycles,” Petrov was quoted as saying.

The amendments to the legislation would envisage fining offenders up to 120,000 rubles (\$2,100) or handing down prison sentences of up to five years.

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