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French Group Accuses United Russia of Stealing Design for 'Straight Flag'

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A conservative family flags protesting same-sex marriage wave at a La Manif Pour Tous rally in Paris.

French opponents of gay marriage have accused the ruling United Russia party of using their logo without permission after it unveiled a “heterosexual flag” in honor of traditional family values, news reports said.

United Russia's use of the flag, which bears a striking resemblance to that of La Manif Pour Tous — a movement against same-sex marriage — was never authorized by the French group, its leader Ludovine de La Rochere told Le Figaro on Thursday. She also rubbished claims by Andrei Lisovenko, who heads United Russia's Moscow branch, that his party had permission to use the symbol.

The Russian version of the flag, which Lisovenko demonstrated to pro-Kremlin daily Izvestia earlier this week, shows the outlines of a man and a woman holding hands with three children

and carries the Russian-language hashtag “A Real Family.”

But shortly after the article's publication, Russian bloggers pointed out that the flag was almost identical to the logo of La Manif Pour Tous. The only difference is that the French image features two children, instead of three.

De La Rochere said her movement would not have allowed United Russia to use the flag, even if it had asked for permission.

“We have a very precise charter that sets a number of condition, including one that we remain non-partisan,” she was quoted by Le Figaro as saying. A partnership with United Russia, a political party, would have violated those terms, she told BuzzFeed News.

De La Rochere also denounced descriptions of the image as a “heterosexual flag,” saying that she and her allies “condemn all forms of homophobia,” Le Figaro reported. “For us, it is the flag of children’s rights,” she was quoted as saying by BuzzFeed News.

News of the stolen flag by no means the first plagiarism scandal to hit Russian politics. Dissernet, an online group aimed at exposing intellectual plagiarism by public figures, have analyzed scores of government officials' graduate theses in recent years and accused them of lifting huge chunks of their dissertations from other sources, without attribution.

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