The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Leaves U.S.-Owned Grain Terminal Over Homophobic Comment

August 20, 2015

Konstantin Olkhovoi

A Russian man had to leave his job at the U.S.-owned Cargill grain terminal in Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia after writing a homophobic comment below a company news story about a gay pride parade, a local Russian news site reported Wednesday.

Cargill posted a report on its website in early July about a gay pride parade in which the company's American employees had participated, and encouraged readers to leave comments. Konstantin Olkhovoi wrote that the event was "loathsome," news site 161.ru reported.

Olkhovoi was summoned the next day by the terminal's management, who were outraged by the comment. Though the comment was quickly deleted, the Americans had already read it.

Olkhovoi told 161.ru that he left the company by mutual agreement. "I realized that I wouldn't be able to continue working there," he said.

In Russia, the incident sparked an Internet backlash against Cargill. Over 400 people have

signed an online petition on activist website Change.org calling for Cargill's operations in Russia to be banned and describing Olkhovoi's dismissal as “an intrusion into Russia's internal affairs, and against its laws,” the petition said.

In 2013 President Vladimir Putin signed a so-called “gay propaganda law,” which bans the promotion of “non-traditional sexual relations” to minors.

Most Russians hold negative views of LGBT people, a Levada Center poll revealed in March. Thirty-seven percent of respondents said homosexuality was a disease that should be professionally treated.

The poll was conducted among 800 people with a margin of error not exceeding 4.1 percent.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/08/20/russian-leaves-us-owned-grain-terminal-over-homophobic-comment-a49081