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Russia to Get Single Agency to Oversee Copyright

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Grigory Ivliyev

Russia will get a single federal agency to regulate intellectual property rights, sweeping away the more than 20 different government departments that currently — and ineffectively — enforce copyright, the head of the new body said this week.

The new regulator will be established by the end of 2015 on the basis of the Russian Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Rospatent), the agency in charge of registering patents and trade brands.

Grigory Ivliyev, Rospatent's chief, said at a press conference Tuesday his aim was to "transform Rospatent into a federal service that will be the only regulator in the area of intellectual property rights in Russia."

All government agencies now involved in the control of intellectual property will transfer

their functions to Rospatent by the year's end, he said.

The move was triggered by the complexity of the current regulatory system. Twenty-four federal agencies police copyright in Russia, the Kommersant newspaper reported last month, citing First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov. By contrast, in almost all European countries patent law and copyright is regulated by one organization, according to Ivliyev.

The result is that intellectual property rights in Russia are practically nonexistent, he added, and companies are missing out on royalties and licensing revenues.

In the most advanced areas of the country — such as the republic of Tatarstan, about 700 kilometers east of Moscow — the share of intellectual property in regional output does not exceed 4 percent, Ivliyev said, cautioning that there was no accurate data for Russia as a whole.

In 2013, President Vladimir Putin said the share of intellectual property in Russia's gross domestic product did not exceed 1 percent, while in neighboring Finland it accounted for 20 percent of GDP.

Ivliyev said his agency would borrow from international experience to create the unified regulator.

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