

Russian Bill Proposed to Overturn Yukos Compensation Ruling

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The Russian Constitutional Court in Moscow

A cross-party group of State Duma deputies has introduced a draft bill that would authorize the Russian Constitutional Court to overturn international court decisions “if they run counter to the provisions of the Russian constitution,” the RIA Novosti news agency reported Wednesday.

The main goal of the proposal was “to safeguard Russian legal sovereignty,” one of the bill's co-sponsors, the Communist party lawmaker Vasily Likhachev, was quoted as saying.

“We do not reject the role and significance of international legal standards, international law. This practice exists in Germany, Britain, Austria, Italy and several other countries,” he said, RIA Novosti reported.

The bill's authors explicitly mentioned the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in their address to the Duma, saying they wished to enable the Russian legal system to “resist tendentious rulings requiring [Russia] to pay compensation out of the state budget.”

Duma deputies addressed the court with an inquiry regarding the possibility of overturning ECHR decisions, specifically international arbitration cases seeking compensation from the Russian government for the former shareholders of the now defunct Yukos oil firm, the Kommersant newspaper reported Wednesday.

TIn July 2014, the ECHR ruled that Russia owed over \$2.5 billion in compensation for “unfair proceedings” in the tax evasion case against Yukos — in addition to covering legal costs.

Another of the bill's co-authors — Mikhail Emelyanov from the left-of-centre party A Just Russia — said that the proposals were “a matter of principle.” Kommersant reported.

“The Russian Federation has delegated some of its sovereign powers to international organizations. However, our partners have started to abuse [the situation],” he said.

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