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Russia Could Lower Duty-Free Thresholds Unilaterally

By The Moscow Times

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Purchases falling within the new limits would come with a flat 25 euro fee; those exceeding them would additionally be subject to customs duties.

Russia would not need a Eurasian Union-wide agreement in order to tighten customs restrictions on online purchases made by Russian customers within the trade bloc, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Friday.

The Eurasian Economic Commission, the union's regulatory body, was set to debate lowering the allowance for duty-free online shopping from 1,000 euros to 150 euros ($1,058 to $106), and the accompanying weight limit to 10 kilograms, at a high-level meeting on Monday. The current weight limit applied in Russia is 21 kilograms.

“Unfortunately, our Kazakh colleagues again chose not to support us,” deputy head of Russia's Federal Customs Service Tatyana Golendeyeva was quoted as saying by Vedomosti.

“If we reach a dead end on the matter, Russia may settle it on a national level,” she added.

Purchases falling within the new limits would come with a flat 25 euro fee; those exceeding them would additionally be subject to customs duties.

At the moment, only Russia and Kazakhstan apply the uniform 1,000 euro threshold, with the remaining members of the Union — Belarus, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan — retaining 200 and 400 euro duty-free spending caps.

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