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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Lack of Tax Stamps Threatens Russian Alcohol Imports

By The Moscow Times

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Alcohol imports into Russia may stop due to a shortage of excise stamps, the Kommersant news website reported Thursday.

Russian law requires all alcohol imports to have a stamp so that they can be properly taxed. The State Duma called for the old excise stamps to be replaced by a new model last year, but no company has yet been given the contract to create the new version.

Foreign companies are continuing to purchase the old excise stamps, but supplies are running low after production was halted in anticipation of the new model.

Problems in obtaining stamps have already resulted in a sharp decline in imports, with some companies suspending deliveries completely, said the Alcohol Products Importers' Union.

“The tender, development, ordering, production and delivery of the excise stamps may take several months,” union chairman Valery Filatov told Kommersant.

Although Russian domestic production of vodka recently increased by 30 percent, the Russian market for other alcohol is largely dependent on imports.

The whiskey, gin, and absinthe markets are almost completely dependent on foreign suppliers, while 20 percent of wine, and 15 percent cognac come from abroad, Kommersant reported.

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