

# Youth Group in Russia's Altai Region Labeled 'Foreign Agent'

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Arktika, a regional youth-oriented non-governmental organization, has been added to the list of foreign agents, according to a statement on the Russian Justice Ministry's official website.

Arktika — which currently has more than 50 permanent members — was launched in 2012 in Russia's southern Siberian Altai region as an organization to help young people and teenagers cope with domestic mistreatment or conflicts with the law, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

According to an open letter published on the organization's website Thursday, Arktika has voluntarily agreed to be included in the foreign agents register.

Arktika has been consistently pressured to voluntarily accept the status, or face "compulsory inclusion" which entails a fine of up to 500,000 rubles (\$7,800) — a fine that would lead to a difficult financial situation for the organization, Arktika's head Anatoly Lomakin wrote.

"We are not going to stop our work. On the contrary, we will make every effort to make at least some positive changes in young people's lives," Lomakin wrote, adding that Arktika will not cancel multiple sports and touristic events scheduled for this year.

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