

United Russia Politician who Urged Russians to 'Eat Less' in Crisis Has Degree Annulled

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Ilya Gaffner **YouTube**

The Russian politician who famously urged Russians to cope with soaring food prices by "eating less" has had his further education certificate declared as fake.

Ilya Gaffner, a deputy in the Sverdlovsk regional parliament for the ruling United Russia party, rose to infamy last year by declaring that a 25 percent rise in food prices was "not that bad" and that Russians should simply cope by "eating less."

A Yekaterinburg court ruled on Wednesday that Gaffner's diploma in engineering from the Ural-Siberian Institute of Business was not genuine, and ordered him to destroy his certificate within five days, the court said in a statement. The court found that Gaffner did not have a degree certificate — a prerequisite of studying on the further education certificate course — as he had previously claimed.

Gaffner called the court's ruling "the initiative of political opponents" and vowed to appeal the ruling. "It cannot be illegitimate", he said "I studied and passed with distinction."

The deputy is not the only Russian politician to stand accused of receiving dishonest academic credentials. According to data [presented by Dissernet](#), an independent network of experts, researchers, and reporters working to uncover plagiarism in Russian academia, one in nine members of Russia's previous State Duma plagiarized parts of their academic work.

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