

Almost Half of Russians Support Kremlin Plans to Tax Unemployed 'Parasites'

September 29, 2016



Artyom Geodakyan / TASS

Almost half of Russians — 45 percent — support Kremlin plans to charge the unemployed for the use of public services, according to a survey by state-run pollster the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM).

Some forty-five percent of respondents said that the extra charges should apply to those who did not have a job “without a good reason,” the RIA Novosti news website reported. Another 21 percent of respondents defined all unemployed people as “parasites.”

Forty-five percent also agreed that a year of hard labor was an “adequate punishment” on those who refused to work.

The tax could soon become a reality, with Deputy Prime Minister Olga Golodets announcing a bill for the proposal on Wednesday.

The draft law stipulates that disabled, unemployed citizens will have to pay for the use of social infrastructure. Groups such as veterans and mothers with children under the age of three will be exempt, Russia's Vzglad news outlet reported Wednesday.

Deputy Labor Minister Andrei Pudov also confirmed that his department was looking into the tax, RIA Novosti reported.

Russian lawmakers are consulting with their counterparts in Belarus, where a similar system has already been implemented, RIA Novosti reported.

Working-age adults who live in Belarus must pay a fine if they are not in employment — and paying taxes — for at least 183 days a year. Students, the elderly, and mothers caring for three or more children are exempt.

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