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Russia's Online Shoppers Face New Taxes for Buying Abroad

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Andrei Makhonin / Vedomosti

Russian consumers could soon find themselves hit with new taxes for buying items from online retailers such as Amazon and ASOS.

Some packages from online retailers based outside of the Eurasian Economic Union could be subject to the tariffs by mid-2017, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Tuesday.

Under current legislation, only parcels worth over 1,000 euros or weighing more than 31 kilograms are liable to be taxed. Duty stands at 30 percent, or 4 euros per kilogram.

The new laws would half that limit, making any parcel worth more than 500 euros liable to pay tax, Deputy Finance Minister Ilya Trunin told the Interfax news agency.

A second tax band would also be introduced by the end of 2018, ensuring that packages worth more than 200 euros would have to pay duty of 15 percent.

The plans are a move to protect Russian retailers from falling victim to Western competitors,

and have been backed by Russian Association of E-Commerce, featuring Russian retail giants such as M Video, El Dorado, Ozon and Detskiy Mir.

Russians are expected to spend some 900 billion rubles online in 2016, 18.4 percent more than in 2015. Just over a third was spent with non-Russian companies, a 45 percent increase on the year before.

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