

Russia's Senators Pass Media 'Foreign Agent' Bill

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Russia's Federation Council / Flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Russia's Federation Council has overwhelmingly voted in favor of a bill targeting foreign news outlets in retaliation to the Kremlin-run channel RT's registration as a "foreign agent" in the United States.

Moscow said it would swiftly respond to what it claims was a crackdown on Russian media in the U.S. after RT ceded to pressure and labeled itself a foreign agent earlier this month.

The new bill allows the government to designate news outlets receiving funding from abroad as "foreign agents" and block the websites of so-called "undesirable organizations."

Related article: [How Russia's Foreign Agent Law Cracks Down on U.S. Media \(Op-ed\)](#)

"Foreign agent" media would be required to disclose their status, report their activities and agree to financial inspections. The label would apply if the news outlet is either registered

abroad, receives foreign funding or receives financial support from Russian firm that is itself financed from abroad.

Non-compliant foreign organizations could be blocked in Russia without a court order.

The State Duma voted unanimously in favor of the bill last week and the Justice Ministry has moved in on two U.S.-funded outlets before the upper house took it up for consideration.

During Wednesday's session, the Federation Council voted 154-0 with one abstention for the foreign agent bill.

It takes effect after President Vladimir Putin [signs](#) it into law.

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