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Russian Bill Labeling Individuals 'Foreign Agents' Passes First Reading

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PIXABAY

Russian lawmakers have passed in a first reading a law to name individuals, including bloggers, "foreign agents" after applying the label to several foreign media last year.

At least nine news organizations funded by the U.S. government have been designated "foreign agents" under the original version of the law since it was signed by President Vladimir Putin last fall in retaliation to America's decision to restrict Kremlin-run media.

Link:
https://themoscowtimes.com/news/after-foreign-agent-law-Russia-creates-legal-framework-ban-foreign-newspapers-59716

An extension of the measure would allow authorities to also label individuals who distribute information as "foreign agents" if they receive any funding from a foreign government.

The amendment was supported by 333 State Duma deputies, with one abstention and one lawmaker voting against.

“In modern society, any person can be a mass media," Pyotr Tolstoy, a co-author of the bill, was cited as saying by the BBC’s Russian service. "You don’t have to register as a media organization, but [you can] distribute information through social networks and other links."

The expanded law will also force blacklisted news organizations and individuals to add a “foreign agent” label to all content, including social media posts. Russian organizations or users who cite the content will also need to specify it was created by a "foreign agent."

Tolstoy said that the new regulations would apply to all sources of information, including television stations, bloggers, social media users and even culinary websites.

“If someone distributes information from a resource that works against Russia and in the interests of another government, then that information must be marked,” he was cited as saying by the investigative Novaya Gazeta newspaper on Friday.

“There’s not a word on any sort of censorship in this law since it doesn’t affect the content of messages,” he added at a plenary session discussion of the draft bill.

Original url:
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