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Russian Official Fired After Claiming Retirees Can Live off $50 Pension

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Natalia Sokolova / Saratov.ru

A Russian official has been fired after insisting that a monthly pension of 3,500 rubles ($53) is enough for the survival of the country's retirees.

Natalya Sokolova, the labor chief in the southern Volga region of Saratov, was filmed Wednesday arguing with a local lawmaker that $53 per month is sufficient "for minimal physiological needs." Her debate with the outspoken deputy came months after the nationwide minimum wage was raised to the minimum subsistence level of almost $200 on the eve of President Vladimir Putin's inauguration.

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The Saratov governor's office announced on Friday that Sokolova was relieved of her duties effective immediately.

“I consider it unacceptable for the head of a regional ministry to neglect vital topics for the people,” Governor Valery Radayev said in the announcement.

“Those who forget about their responsibilities will be strongly punished.”

Saratov region’s subsistence level for retirees totals $108 while regional statisticians estimate they have the Volga Federal District’s cheapest consumer basket of $48.

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