The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Proposed Referendum on Pension Age Failed to Meet Deadline, Officials Say

October 18, 2018



Central Election Commission chief Ella Pamfilova (Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency)

The Russian public will not get to vote for or against government plans to raise their retirement age as the deadline to file the paperwork has quietly passed this week.

President Vladimir Putin signed into law this month unpopular measures to gradually increase the pension eligibility age by five years for men and women starting in 2019. Election officials approved in August proposals for a nationwide referendum on the increase, though convoluted procedures required its backers to register groups in half of Russia's 85 regions and gather 2 million signatures within two months for the referendum to be approved.

Related article: Activists Deliver 1M Signatures to the Kremlin Against Retirement Age Hike

Only 13 of the required 43 regional initiative groups gathered late last month to agree on the phrasing of the pension age referendum question, election officials said on Wednesday,

adding that all plans to hold the referendum would be terminated as the deadline had lapsed and the number of required groups fell short of a quorum.

“It was a very rewarding experience,” Central Election Commission (CEC) chief Ella Pamfilova said. “When the real possibility of a referendum arose, we took all the necessary measures and were ready to hold it.”

A regional Communist Party chief criticized the federal referendum law at a CEC session on Wednesday for making it “impossible to hold a plebiscite without changes [in the law].”

Russia last held a nationwide referendum in 1993, when a new constitution was adopted.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/10/18/proposed-referendum-pension-age-fails-meet-deadline-officials-say-a63226