

Russia Moves to Raise Legal Drinking Age to 21

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Russia's Health Ministry is drafting legislation to raise the legal drinking age of strong alcohol from 18 to 21, Interfax reported on Friday, citing ministry officials.

Proposals to restrict alcohol sales to individuals under the age of 21 have been repeatedly [debated](#) by Russian lawmakers in recent years. In September, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova announced that the Health Ministry would [prepare](#) a proposal to raise the legal drinking age by February 2019 as part of a national project to improve the population's health through 2024.

Related article: [Deaths From Alcohol Fall by 25% in Russia in 2017](#)

"At a young age, alcohol not only affects health but also behavior, including future habits of alcohol consumption," a ministry spokesperson was [cited](#) as saying by Interfax on Friday in

explaining the proposal to raise the drinking age.

Official statistics cited by Interfax show average alcohol consumption in Russia plummeting by a third between 2009 and 2016. Consumer rights watchdog Rospotrebnadzor has credited new minimum price laws, advertising bans and sales restrictions for the drop.

In November, a survey by the state-run VTsIOM pollster said that 78% of Russians were in favor of raising the minimum drinking age from 18 to 21 years.

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