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Most Russian Ministries Lack Online Transparency — Study

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Only four out of Russia's 22 ministry websites are transparent, a government audit has revealed.

Experts commissioned by Russia's Audit Chamber assessed the ministries' openness of information, data and dialogue, assigning a letter grade to each of the three categories.

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Only the interior, culture, finance and energy ministries received AAA ratings, according to the study published on Wednesday.

"This [transparency] can be described as 'inertial openness,' not backed by any real instructions from the prime minister or the president, nor by a clearly formulated public request for more engagement," the Audit Chamber said.

The lowest grade of CCC went to the recently created Science and Higher Education Ministry, followed by the defense, education, sports and foreign ministries.

Thirteen ministries received A grades for open information and data, while around half of the 22 ministries received Bs for open dialogue.

The Audit Chamber called the distribution "predictable" because information and data are regulated by law, "while open dialogue is easier to simulate."

The study's authors said 50 Russian government agencies were also graded despite most of their activity not falling under national transparency laws. Law enforcement and security service agencies were not rated because they "obviously shouldn't be open and accessible under all these criteria," the Audit Chamber told the RBC news website.

A "unique situation" is unfolding with state corporations that enjoy vast powers and multibillion-dollar subsidies outside transparency law, the study was cited as saying.

"As a result ... part of the state's activities falls out of the scope of any public oversight," RBC quoted it as saying.

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