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Defected Pro-Kremlin Lawmaker Resettles in Germany

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"Maybe I was naive and stupid, but I have done nothing illegal," Robert Shlegel said of his past. **Sergei Karpov / TASS**

A former pro-Kremlin lawmaker who voted for a law banning U.S. citizens from adopting Russian children has resettled in Germany, the country's Süddeutsche Zeitung daily reported Monday.

Robert Schlegel supported the adoption ban, tried to push through a "fake news" bill, co-authored Russia's "Google tax" and boasted about a 2007 cyberattack that crippled neighboring Estonia's networks. He had also been a member of Nashi, a now-defunct patriotic youth group that Western critics likened to the Soviet Komsomol and the Hitler Youth.

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Schlegel told Süddeutsche Zeitung, which reported that he received German citizenship this

spring under a resettlement program for ethnic Germans, that he was "disappointed in politics" and his views have "changed a lot."

"I want my children to grow up in Germany, as part of the culture and people they belong to," he was quoted as saying.

Since resettling, Schlegel reportedly worked as a director for strategic projects and operations at the Swiss cyber protection company Acronis' Munich office.

Acronis said it suspended Schlegel pending an internal review following the publication of the Süddeutsche Zeitung report, which questioned the company's employment of someone with links to cyberattacks.

Referring to videos where he boasted about the cyberattack on Estonia and preceding rioting by mostly Russian-speaking youth, Schlegel told Süddeutsche Zeitung: "Maybe I was naive and stupid, but I have done nothing illegal."

Schlegel later suggested his past involvement in Nashi and the ruling United Russia party was a "role" that he played.

"Nobody has to play the same 'role' forever, especially under pressure from others," he told the independent Meduza news website Tuesday.

"I'm older now. I guess I've simply re-examined my views on many things," Schlegel, 34, said.

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