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Putin Proposes Closing Gay Marriage Loophole – Vedomosti

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Russia itself does not register same-sex marriages, but its clerks have recognized marriages registered outside Russia. **Doris Heimann / DPA / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin wants to enact changes that would ban Russian authorities from recognizing gay marriages registered outside the country, the Vedomosti business daily reported Thursday.

A legal loophole in Russia's family law recognizes same-sex couples who have tied the knot abroad as long as they're not close relatives or are already married. This led to at least two high-profile cases of Russian clerks unintentionally recognizing gay marriage since 2018.

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Putin submitted draft amendments to Russia's Family Code this week that ban "immoral interpretations" of international treaties governing family affairs, according to Vedomosti.

“The ban primarily concerns same-sex marriages,” it cited an unnamed member of Putin’s task force on constitutional amendments as saying. The source pointed to same-sex marriages registered abroad in particular.

International law had taken priority in Russia before this summer's nationwide vote on constitutional amendments granted Russia’s Constitution precedence over international treaties and other acts.

According to Vedomosti, Russian authorities will now be able to challenge “immoral” international decisions with the Constitutional Court.

Russia itself does not register same-sex marriages and the constitutional vote added language defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman to Russia's basic law. Following the constitutional reform vote, lawmakers submitted draft legislation seeking to explicitly ban same-sex and transgender marriage.

Russia Pen & Paper law firm partner Konstantin Dobrynin described the morality-based ban as legally “strange” in comments to Vedomosti.

Vedomosti did not say when lawmakers plan to vote on the gay marriage loophole proposal, but Putin’s other constitutional reforms that require changes to federal laws have been given top priority in Russia’s lower house of parliament.

Putin has sought to distance Russia from Western values including liberal attitudes toward homosexuality in his 20 years in power.

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