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Russian Lawmaker Convicted in U.S. of Being Foreign Agent Seeks to Regulate Dolls' Diversity

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Maria Butina, a deputy from the United Russia faction (C). **Moskva News Agency**

Russian lawmaker Maria Butina said she is working on legislation to regulate dolls, pointing to growing diversity and representation in the children's toys.

Butina was jailed in the United States for working as a foreign agent and deported to Moscow, where she was elected to the lower-house State Duma in this September's parliamentary elections.

In a Telegram post Tuesday, Butina contrasted a white-skinned Russian doll to a dark-skinned, pink-haired Barbie with a caption saying "Maybe it's time to think?"

"While the Education Ministry closely monitors school textbooks, there are no standards for educational toys for kindergartens, which is a shame," she wrote.

"I hope it doesn't turn out in a couple of years that our children are being raised on [foreign]

dolls and emulating them," Butina added.

In comments to the Znak.com news website, the newly elected lawmaker said she chose doll standards as a pet issue after speaking with the worried parents in her native Kirov region.

"This is a national issue and there can be no opponents here," Butina was quoted as saying.

"As a woman and a teacher by education, I understand that the future of our children depends on their formation in the first years of life," she said.

Butina, who was hired by the state-funded RT television to host an online show that mocks the opposition following her return to Russia, vowed to work with the Education Ministry on drafting a set of standards for dolls.

"There's no specific initiative yet, but I don't rule out its appearance," she said.

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