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Russian Lawmakers Eye Expansion of 'LGBT Propaganda' Law

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Nina Ostanina, head of the State Duma Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs. **Moskva News Agency**

Russian lawmakers on Monday submitted legislation that would ban any information deemed "LGBT propaganda" by Russian authorities.

Current Russian law bans the display of "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relationships" toward minors.

If passed, the latest bill would restrict "information that denies family values" as well as "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations" aimed at any age group, according to its explanatory note published on the lower-house State Duma website.

"Public approval and recognition of such relationships are dangerous not only for children and young people... but for the whole society," the explanatory note states.

According to the authors of the initiative, the promotion of a childfree lifestyle and non-

traditional sexual relations are as dangerous for Russia's society as propaganda of drugs, suicide, and extremism.

The legislation also would allow authorities to ban websites containing "prohibited information" about LGBT relationships.

The bill must pass three rounds of voting in the lower house State Duma and one in the upper-house Federation Council as well as be signed by President Vladimir Putin before it becomes law.

Russia in 2013 outlawed "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations" toward minors, a move seen as part of the Kremlin's wider conservative agenda. The ban has been widely criticized by human rights groups and LGBT rights advocates.

The current law states that such "propaganda" is punishable by a fine of up to 1 million rubles ($17,200) or up to 15 days in jail.

Homosexuality was a criminal offense in Russia until 1993 and was classed as a mental illness until 1999.

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