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Gazprom-Owned TV Channel Fined for 'LGBT Propaganda' Over Music Video Kiss

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The Music video for Tantsy Minus' 1999 single "Gorod." **Video grab**

A music channel owned by the media arm of Russian energy giant Gazprom was fined $11,300 for spreading "LGBT propaganda among minors" in a 90s-era music video that shows two women kissing, the independent Vyorstka news outlet reported Friday.

The music video with the offending kiss aired in July on the channel Lya-Minor TV, which is owned by Red Media, itself a part of Gazprom Media.

The video is set to the Russian rock band Tantsy Minus' 1999 single "Gorod" (Russian for "city").

Vyorstka notes that Russia's state media watchdog filed a complaint against the channel in September.

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According to the outlet, the watchdog used a “kissing classification” system to determine that the 9-second snippet showed “gestures of affection and tactile gestures, as well as kissing scenes between two persons of the same biological sex.”

The channel’s defense argued in court that the kiss “promotes love for Russia and its cities” and should not be sexualized.

“The female characters who kiss in the clip epitomize the beauty and enticement of a big city,” the defense attorney was quoted as saying.

Moscow’s Tagansky District Court on Dec. 18 found the channel guilty of spreading “LGBT propaganda” and issued a fine of 1 million rubles ($11,300).

Russia banned “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations” toward minors in 2013. A decade later, President Vladimir Putin expanded the ban to outlaw public displays of non-traditional relationships and lifestyles to people of any age.

Rights groups have criticized the Russian government for failing to define what constitutes "gay propaganda" and have warned that the vague criteria mean TV channels and websites could be fined at whim.

Since invading Ukraine in 2022, Putin has accelerated Moscow's suppression of the LGBTQ+ community as part of a broader "culture war" with the West.

Late last year, Russia’s top court designated the so-called “international LGBT public movement” as a banned “extremist” organization, effectively outlawing LGBTQ+ activism.

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