The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

‘Soft Power in a Cardboard Box’: Pro-Kremlin Activist Calls for Pizza Ban

November 03, 2026



Vitaly Borodin. **vk / borodinfpbk**

From geopolitical adversaries to covert foreign plots, Russia seemingly sees malign influences lurking everywhere. But according to a prominent pro-Kremlin activist, one of the country’s more underappreciated threats comes topped with cheese — pizza.

On Tuesday, Vitaly Borodin, who heads the Kremlin-aligned Federal Security and Anti-Corruption Foundation, called on Russian schools and universities to remove pizza from their cafeteria menus, branding the dish as Western “soft power in a cardboard box.”

“For a thousand years, our grandmothers baked traditional pies, and now we’re being sold an Italian flatbread slathered in ketchup,” Borodin wrote in a post on Telegram. “Let me remind you that Italy is on the list of unfriendly states and supplies weapons to the Kyiv regime.”

Over the years, Borodin has earned a reputation for filing complaints with law enforcement against alleged foreign influences, targeting independent news outlets, celebrities, liberal activists and even Santa Claus as potential “agents” of Western subversion.

“First it’s pizza, then it’s Halloween. And all of a sudden, children can’t name a single Russian dish,” Borodin added in his Telegram post on Tuesday, urging authorities to ban untranslated foreign words on storefront signs and advertisements, singling out names like “Pizzeria,” “Pepperoni” and “Papa John’s.”

Related article: Sverdlovsk Lawmaker Calls for Halloween Pumpkin Purge

Borodin’s anti-pizza diatribe and those before it reflect a broader rejection of Western influence at the government level in Russia, alongside growing cultural conservatism.

In November 2022, President Vladimir Putin signed a decree outlining the state’s role in preserving “traditional Russian spiritual and moral values” rooted in, among other things, cultural heritage.

The Kremlin has also framed the war in Ukraine and wider geopolitical tensions as part of a civilizational struggle, casting Russia as a defender of traditional values against the encroachment of liberal Western norms.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/11/03/soft-power-in-a-cardboard-box-pro-kremlin-activist-calls-for-pizza-ban-a94164