[RU] Federal Law No. 324-FZ extends "traditional values" restrictions to online audiovisual content

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Federal Law No. 324-FZ of 31 July 2025 came into force on 1 March 2026. It prohibits the distribution of audiovisual works containing materials that "discredit traditional Russian spiritual and moral values and/or propagandise the rejection thereof" (*дискредитирующие традиционные российские духовно-нравственные ценности и (или) пропагандирующие их отрицание*). The law amends Federal Law No. 149-FZ of 27 July 2006 ("On Information") and Federal Law No. 126-FZ of 22 August 1996 ("On State Support for Cinematography"), adding this as grounds for refusing or revoking a distribution certificate (*прокатное удостоверение*) and empowering the Ministry of Culture to issue formal conclusions (*заключения*) on online content. Audiovisual platforms and social networks must cease distribution of flagged works at the behest of Roskomnadzor (the media regulator).

The law does not define "traditional values". It relies on Presidential Decree No. 809 of 9 November 2022, which enumerates 17 values including patriotism, strong family, and the unity of the peoples of Russia. The HSE Centre for Religion and Law warned in August 2025 that the absence of specific interpretations creates "a risk of subjective and potentially arbitrary decisions".

Two Ministry of Culture orders implement the law. Order No. 2110 (18 November 2025), incorporating the new approach into distribution certificate procedures and granting the ministry power to unilaterally amend previously issued certificates. Order No. 2503 (29 December 2025) establishes a complaint procedure for online content: any person may file a complaint with a direct link to the work; an expert council (*экспертный совет*) reviews it within 20 working days; a positive conclusion is forwarded to Roskomnadzor, whereupon the platform has 24 hours to remove the content. As of March 2026, the expert council had not yet been constituted with named members.

It is worth noting that Gazprom-Media, a Russian media holding company, has invested several hundred million roubles in an AI content-screening system ("Predicto"), deployed on Premier and Rutube to flag non-compliant content, including references to drugs and alcohol (Forbes Russia, January 2026).

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Since Federal Law No. 324-FZ came into force, the ministry refused a certificate for the film *Nuremberg* (James Vanderbilt, 2025) on 4 March 2026, invoking non-compliance under Order No. 2110. However, this pattern predates the law: Alexander Sokurov's *Fairy Tale* was already denied a certificate in October 2023 and the Yakut thriller *Ayta* had its certificate revoked in September 2023 for "destructive information contradicting the principles of unity of the peoples [sic] of Russia".

Before the federal law came into force, Russian platforms undertook extensive pre-emptive content modifications. Documented cases include: the cropping of drug-use scenes from *Anora* (Palme d'Or 2024) by TNT; the deletion of Volodymyr Zelensky from scenes from a domestic series by Amediateka; and the deletion of nudity and a suicide reference from Mikhalkov's *Burnt by the Sun* (1994) by IVI and Viju. No provision of Russian law requires platform operators to notify rights holders when licensed content is modified for compliance. European producers and distributors with content on Russian platforms therefore have no formal notification mechanism.

Law No. 324-FZ therefore completes a three-tier system of control: state funding exceeding RUB 40 billion (~EUR 420 million annually); the distribution of certificates; and post-release complaint-driven enforcement.

Russia remained among France's top three cinema markets in 2024, with an estimated 3.7 million admissions, according to Unifrance. No EU sanctions prohibit film exports to Russia. Any European co-production circulating in Russia can now be flagged under Order No. 2503 and the unilateral amendment power in Order No. 2110 means previously issued distribution certificates provide no guaranteed protection.

Федеральный закон № 324-ФЗ от 31 июля 2025 года

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