[RU] False information amendments made

IRIS 2019-5:1/24

Andrei Richter
Comenius University (Bratislava)

On 18 March 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law a set of amendments to the Federal Statute on information, information technologies and the protection of information (or the IT Law, see IRIS 2018-1/39, IRIS 2017-8/34, IRIS 2014-6/31 and IRIS 2014-3/40) that aim to stop online dissemination of certain categories of false information under the guise of truthful information.

The amendments are to the existing Article 15-3 ("Procedures for restricting access to information disseminated illegally") of the IT Law. They prohibit the dissemination in "network publications" (or registered online media, see IRIS 2012-8/36) of "untruthful socially significant information", which would constitute a "threat to the life and/or health of citizens, to property, the threat of massive violations of public order and/or public security, or threat of establishing obstacles to the functioning of every-day supply objects, transport of social infrastructure, credit entities, objects of power-supply, industry or communications".

The new law provides additional powers to Roskomnadzor, the governmental supervisory authority in media, communications and personal data traffic (see IRIS 2012-8/36), on content control of the websites without a court decision. Upon an appeal of the Prosecutor-General or one of his (currently) 18 deputies, Roskomnadzor is now empowered to "immediately" notify the editors of the network publication and instruct them to remove such information. The editors shall "immediately" follow the notice of Roskomnadzor. Should they fail to abide it, Roskomnadzor instructs ISPs to "immediately" block access to the websites of the "network publications". Such blocking will last until the illegal information has been removed.

Another bill amends the Code on Administrative Offenses and establishes fines for all media outlets and online authors that spread "untruthful socially significant information" of up to 1 million rubles, if no harm was made, and of 1.5 million rubles (EUR 20 500), in cases when the harm was indeed made.

The amendments were adopted by the lower house of the Parliament on 7 March and approved by the upper chamber on 13 March. They became effective on 19 March 2019.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media previously expressed his concern about the draft laws in a statement.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

О внесении изменений в статью 15-3 Федерального закона "Об информации, информационных технологиях и о защите информации"

http://pravo.gov.ru/

Federal Statute "On amendments to Article 15-3 of the Federal Statute on information, information technologies and protection of information." 18 March 2019, No. 31-FZ. Officially published on 19 March 2019

О внесении изменений в Кодекс Российской Федерации об административных правонарушениях

http://pravo.gov.ru/

Federal Statute "On amendments to Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offenses." 18 March 2019, No. 27-FZ. Officially published on 19 March 2019

Law further restricting speech in Russia might negatively affect freedoms of media and of information on Internet, says OSCE Representative. 14 December 2018

https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/406775

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026