[RU] Disrespectful information banned

IRIS 2019-5:1/25

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On 18 March 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law a set of amendments to the Federal Statute on information, information technologies and 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 offensive information.

A new Article 15-1-1 bans spreading information that “exhibits blatant disrespect for the society, State, official state symbols of the Russian Federation, Constitution of the Russian Federation or governmental bodies of the Russian Federation.”

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 hosting providers (in Russian and in English) that they shall notify the owner of the online resource (website) to remove such offensive information. The owner shall follow the notice within 24 hours. In the case of failure to abide it, the hosting provider shall block access to the resource. If the hosting provider fails to do so, Roskomnadzor instructs ISPs to “immediately” block access to the websites with offensive information. Such blocking lasts until the illegal information is removed.

Another bill amends the Code on Administrative Offenses and establishes fines for online dissemination of such illegal information of 30 000 to 50 000 roubles, and if the offence is repeated - of 100 000 to 200 000 roubles (and even 300 000 roubles, or EUR 4 100, for a third offence) or administrative arrest of 15 days.

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.

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О внесении изменения в Федеральный закон "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

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