

Putin: French Same-Sex Marriage Law Puts Adoptions at Risk

President Vladimir Putin signaled on Friday that Moscow would seek changes in an agreement regulating adoptions of Russian children by French parents, saying a French law allowing **same-sex marriage** went against traditional Russian values.

Russia has already halted adoptions by Americans in a dispute with Washington over human rights. Any move to scrap the year-old agreement with France, or impose new restrictions, would deepen a divide between Putin and European nations over homosexuality and **gay rights**.

Putin, who has often championed socially conservative values since he began a third term last May, was greeted in the Netherlands this month by demonstrators protesting against Russian legislation that critics say would discriminate against gays.

At a meeting on children's issues, Putin expressed support for a regional lawmaker, Marina Orgeyeva, who proposed reviewing the adoption agreement with France because of its decision to allow same-sex marriage, Russian news agencies reported. The French parliament approved the new law on Tuesday.

"She is right. We need to react to what is going on around us," Interfax quoted Putin as saying. "We respect our partners, but we ask that they respect our cultural traditions and the ethical, legislative and moral norms of Russia."

"I think we have the right to make changes."

Withdrawal Option

Putin made no recommendations about how the agreement might be

altered, but a senior pro-Kremlin lawmaker, Yelena Mizulina, said among the options were withdrawing from the agreement or seeking to change it, state-run RIA reported.

The agreement with France is one of several Russia has reached with Western nations in an effort to clarify rules for the adoption of Russian children and enable Russia to better monitor their progress abroad to ensure they are treated well.

Russia withdrew from a similar agreement with the United States and banned adoptions of Russian children by Americans as of January 1 as part of its response to a U.S. law designed to punish Russia for alleged human rights abuses.

Putin, in power as president or prime minister since 2000, has spoken repeatedly in his new Kremlin term about the importance of what he has called traditional values and has drawn closer to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Russia's parliament, in which the pro-Putin United Russia has a majority, has given preliminary approval to a ban on "homosexual propaganda" targeting minors, which critics say would effectively ban gay rights demonstrations.

The United States has said the legislation severely restricts freedom of expression and assembly.

The European Union and United States have also criticized Russia over what critics say is a clampdown on dissent in Putin's new term, but he has rejected their concerns.

In the Netherlands in early April, Putin said Russia did not discriminate against gays, but criticized same-sex couples for not helping reverse Russia's population decline.

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