

The State Duma is preparing to adopt a law on protecting the Russian language

FAO marketing and advertising departments of companies

Pepeliaev Group advises that on 11 February 2025 the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation adopted draft law No. 468229-8¹ “On amendments to the Federal Law ‘On the national language of the Russian Federation’ and individual items of Russian legislation” (the Draft Law).

Purpose of the Draft Law

The draft law was developed by a group of deputies and was put before the State Duma at the end of 2023, then being fine-tuned until recently.

According to the explanatory note to the Draft Law, its purpose is to form a nationally oriented environment in Russia, protect the Russian language and restrict the use of Anglicized words and foreign words throughout the entire territory of the Russian Federation, primarily in the public domain, for example:

- in advertising;
- when goods are sold or works are performed or services are supplied to consumers;
- in materials generated by the printed mass media;
- when town planning activities are performed.

What legislative instruments does the Draft Law propose to amend?

The Draft Law proposes amendments to the following legislative instruments:

- Federal Law No. 53-FZ “On the national language of the Russian Federation” dated 1 June 2005,
- Federal Law No. 78-FZ “On librarianship” dated 29 December 1994,

¹ https://sozd.duma.gov.ru/bill/468229-8?sortEventsByNum=num_down&sortEventsByDate=date_up

- Law of the Russian Federation No. 3612-1 "The fundamentals of legislation of the Russian Federation on culture" dated 9 October 1992.
- Russian Law No. 2300-1 "On the protection of consumer rights" dated 7 February 1992,
- Federal Law No. 38-FZ "On advertising" dated 13 March 2006,
- Russian law No. 2124-1 "On the mass media" dated 27 December 1991
- Federal Law No. 7-FZ dated 13 January 1995 "On the coverage of activities of public authorities in the state-owned mass media",
- Federal Law No. 214-FZ "On shared construction of apartment buildings and other real estate, and on amending certain items of Russian legislation" dated 30 December 2014,
- "The Town Planning Code of the Russian Federation" No. 190-FZ dated 29 December 2004.

Amendments to Federal Law No. 53-FZ "On the national language of the Russian Federation" dated 1 June 2005

It is proposed to enshrine the obligation to use the Russian language as the national language of Russia in a trade name (save for a company name as a component of a trade name).

Changes to Russian Law No. 2300-1 "On the protection of consumer rights" dated 7 February 1992

At present, articles 8 and 9 of Russian Law No. 2300-1 "On the protection of consumer rights" dated 7 February 1992 provide for the Russian language to be used only in the information about the manufacturer (service provider, seller) and information about the goods (work or services) that is brought to the attention of consumers when sale and purchase agreements or contracts to perform work (provide services) are concluded.

The draft law proposes to extend the requirement for the Russian language to be used with respect to information that is intended for public distribution among consumers. Such a provision will be set out in article 10.1, which will amend the law on the protection of consumers' rights.

Information that is intended for public distribution among consumers is determined in the Draft Law as information that does not contain advertising, is placed in public areas (places to which the general public has access) and is brought to the attention of the general public if placed (in other words, if it is distributed using signboards, inscriptions, name plates, external surfaces, information plates, signs, other technical devices etc.).

Under the Draft Law such information includes:

- information about the class or type of goods (work, services), individual groups of goods (works, services) without a particular product (work, service) being singled out among similar goods (works, services);
- information about additional consumer properties and characteristics of goods (works and services);
- information about the special conditions for purchasing goods (works and services), including about the conduct of promotional events, campaigns and offers, special prices (discounts) sales and benefits, returns or a refund of a part of the price of a product (work or service);
- information about the functioning and the conditions of an organisation's availability;
- information about the trade name that the company and/or manufacturer (service provider, seller) uses.

Thus, once the Draft Law is adopted it will be impossible to use such words as "coffee", "fresh", "sale", "shop" or "open" on signs and in shop windows.

At the discretion of the manufacturer (service provider, seller) information intended for public distribution among consumers may be communicated, apart from the national language of the Russian Federation, in the official languages of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation and in foreign languages. However, the specified information must be identical in content, layout and technical execution as the information intended for public distribution among consumers that is communicated in Russian.

At the same time, the above requirement will not extend to company names, trademarks and service marks.

Amendments to Federal Law No. 38-FZ "On advertising" dated 13 March 2006

It is also proposed to set out the requirement for a compulsory translation into Russian in the Federal Law on advertising with respect to information that is contained in advertising and is communicated in languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation or in a foreign language.

Texts in advertisements in Russian and in other languages (if any) must also become identical in content, and equal in terms of layout and technical execution. In order to do so, in article 5 of the Federal Law on advertising it is proposed to amend part 7.2.

Amendments to Russian Law No. 2124-1 "On the mass media" dated 27 December 1991 and Federal Law No. 7-FZ "On the coverage of activities of public authorities in the state-owned mass media" dated 13 January 1995

According to the Draft Law, articles 32.1 and 6 of the above laws will be amended by parts 8 and 4, respectively. Once the Draft Law has been adopted, news programmes on nationwide Russian compulsory TV channels and radio channels available to the general public, as well as announcements in news programmes of the audiovisual public mass media, will be broadcast in the Russian language, national languages of republics and in other languages of peoples inhabiting territories of constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

Amendments to Federal Law No. 214-FZ "On shared construction of apartment buildings and other real estate, and on amending certain items of Russian legislation" dated 30 December 2014

The Draft Law is introducing such concepts as a "name of the residential complex" and "name of a low-rise residential complex" that are understood to be a trade name that gives an identity to a residential complex or low-rise residential complex, respectively, if the developer is planning to use such a trade name in advertisements connected with raising funds of equity construction participants.

According to the Draft Law a trade name that gives identity to a capital construction facility (group of facilities) (in the event of the construction of apartment buildings, the name of the residential complex) must be in Russian.

Amendments to the Town-Planning Code of the Russian Federation No. 190-FZ dated 29 December 2004

The amendments will also be made to the rules of the Town-Planning Code. For instance, names of facilities of national, regional or local significance that are planned to be developed and are mentioned in territory planning regulations must also be in Russian. So must names of planning framework elements for which territory planning documents are prepared.

If design documents or operating documents are expected to specify the name of a capital construction facility (group of facilities), such a name must also be in Russian.

Once the Draft Law had been adopted in the first reading, the responsible committee of the State Duma of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation proposed a number of issues that had to be worked through before the Draft Law was put before the Duma in the second reading²:

² The Resolution "On draft Federal Law No. 468229-8 "On amendments to the Federal Law 'On the national language of the Russian Federation' and individual items of Russian legislation"" dated 11 February 2025.

- 1.** The issue of removing provisions of the Draft Law that provide for amendments to be made to the Law on Mass Media and Federal Law No. 7-FZ "On the coverage of activities of public authorities in the state-owned mass media" dated 13 January 1995;
- 2.** The issue of removing the provisions of the Draft Law that extend the requirements for the compulsory use of the state language of the Russian Federation to commercial designations;
- 3.** The provision of the Draft Law that provides for amendments to be made to the Law on Advertising in terms of establishing a compulsory requirement for translating into Russian any information that is contained in advertising and that is rendered in languages of peoples inhabiting Russia or in a foreign language;
- 4.** The issue relating to names of capital construction facilities (groups of facilities) and of low-rise residential complexes that have been commissioned being exempted from the proposed rules of the Draft Law.
- 5.** The provisions of the Draft Law that provide for amendments being made to the Consumer Protection Law, Federal Law No. 214-FZ "On participation in the shared construction of apartment buildings and other real estate facilities, and on amending certain items of Russian legislation" dated 30 December 2004, Town-Planning Code of the Russian Federation in terms of making it possible to use, along with the national language of the Russian Federation, the national languages of republics that are part of the Russian Federation and other languages of peoples inhabiting the Russian Federation in information that is intended to be publicly distributed among consumers, in trade names that give identity to capital construction facilities, names of facilities that are planned to be developed and are mentioned in territory planning regulations, as well as in names of planning framework elements for which territory planning documents are prepared;
- 6.** The provisions of the Draft Law that stipulate amendments to the Consumer Protection Law in terms of information that is intended to be publicly distributed among consumers and is to be provided to consumers as regards the manufacturer (service provider, seller) and the goods (work and services) they sell correlating with the advertising;
- 7.** The Draft Law being amended with transitional provisions that stipulate how its individual provisions will come into force, taking account of the specific industry regulation in various fields of business.

What to think about and what to do

At present the Draft Law is being examined by the State Duma and may be amended during subsequent discussions and improvements. In view of the above we recommend the following:

- 1.** Do not act prematurely based on the current version of the Draft Law;
- 2.** Follow what happens with further movements of the Draft Law;
- 3.** Be prepared to react quickly and conduct an audit of available materials for the presence of foreign words.

We will continue monitoring how the situation develops and will inform our clients in advance about the key amendments.

Help from your adviser

The lawyers of Pepeliaev Group are ready to provide consulting support to clients by advising advertisers and distributors of advertising on the issues of their business. We will also advise developers on matters of using trade names and preparing documentation, as well as represent clients when they liaise with state authorities and provide advice on other matters.

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