

Kremlin Fights Corruption With Fashion Tips

By [Natalya Krainova](#)

July 22, 2010

The  **Moscow Times**

In a two-pronged crackdown against corruption, the Kremlin has presented a new ethics code for officials — complete with fashion tips — and a waiting period for state employees who want to work at the organizations they used to supervise.

But anti-corruption analysts dismissed both measures as empty bureaucratic stunts that would do little to encourage officials and citizens to start fighting corruption.

The ethics code, drafted by the Health and Social Development Ministry and [posted on its web site](#) Thursday, prohibits federal and municipal officials from taking paid side jobs, except in research, education and "creative activities."

Officials are also instructed not to accept gifts nor use their position to pressure anyone for personal gain. The code asks officials to report all attempts to offer bribes or engage in other forms of corruption.

The code also advises officials to be polite and friendly and even provides guidelines on their appearance, which should “instill in citizens respect for the state authorities.”

The code says dress attire should be “a common business style that is distinguished by its formal, moderate, traditional and orderly attributes.”

Punishment for violating the new ethics code can include warnings and dismissal.

The code, approved by the presidential anti-corruption council, will be included in the employment contract that bureaucrats sign when hired, Kremlin chief of staff Sergei Naryshkin said Thursday.

The code is supposed to curb corruption and improve the efficiency of the authorities by setting anti-corruption standards for officials, Naryshkin said.

The implementation of the code will not start until October, he said.

All state agencies are expected to draft their own ethics codes based on the current one but "taking into account the specific characteristics" of the given agency, Naryshkin said.

The Audit Chamber and the Prosecutor General's Office are ahead of the pack because they already abide by similar ethics codes, he said.

Meanwhile, President Dmitry Medvedev has ordered retiring officials who occupy certain federal and municipal posts to wait two years before accepting employment in the commercial or nonprofit organizations they had supervised.

The decree was signed Monday but only [published on the Kremlin's web site Wednesday](#). It bans both full-time and part-time work during the waiting period.

The proposed measures are useless because "bureaucracy will not control itself," said Pavel Kabanov, head of the National Anti-Corruption Committee, a nongovernmental organization.

The only effective ways to curb corruption are public control, independent media and political competition, all of which are virtually absent in Russia, he said.

"Our society is childish: It doesn't understand that it is the citizens who hold power and the bureaucrats are simply supposed to serve the citizens," Kabanov said.

The ethics code simply sums up legal norms already covered by existing legislation, said Yelena Panfilova, head of the anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International Russia.

She said the code would not help fight graft initially but might be useful in the long run.

In 10 to 15 years, "when officials get used to the fact that state service is not for personal enrichment but for serving the citizens, the code may start to work," she told The Moscow Times.

Despite the criticism, the authorities appeared determined to plow ahead with their own ideas for fighting corruption, a campaign that is a hallmark of Medvedev's presidency.

Naryshkin said Thursday that another anti-graft measure in the cards will see state agencies directly subordinate to the president, especially law enforcement agencies, change their mode of operation to become more transparent. He did not elaborate on how this would be achieved.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/07/22/kremlin-fights-corruption-with-fashion-tips-a62>