

Election Official: Facebook Must Be Regulated During Polls

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A senior election official has called for regulating Facebook and public online forums on the eve of elections.

Current legislation bans all public campaigning on the day before elections, as well as releasing exit polls data before the vote's end, but both rules are widely ignored by bloggers and social media commentators online.

A special bill is needed to regulate campaigning in the blogosphere, Central Elections Commission member Maya Grishina said Wednesday, three days after a regional vote that was the last major poll before State Duma elections in December.

Online political agitation should be concentrated on specially created web sites, and blog discussions only allowed in closed communities that casual web surfers cannot access on the eve of elections, Grishina said at a parliamentary round table, [Gazeta.ru reported](#).

She did not elaborate on possible penalties for online violations or give any details of the

proposed bill. But the idea of locking political discussion in online ghettos while regulating mostly foreign-based social media sparked the ire of bloggers.

"This is a stupid and unrealizable idea. You can't force American web sites (Facebook, for example) to live by Russian rules," said Ilya Yashin, a senior member of the liberal opposition group Solidarity and a user of Facebook, Twitter and LiveJournal, according to Gazeta.ru.

"If we follow this path, we might end up with the idea to ban discussing politics in homes," said political analyst Denis Terekhov.

The Communist Party also denounced Grishina's proposal, but United Russia Deputy Robert Shlegel, a co-organizer of Wednesday's round table, said the idea would be discussed further before the start of the Duma campaign.

Popular blogger Anton Nosik noted that vaguely worded legislation supports the proposal. The current law bans not just politicians and their staff but also regular voters from publicly expressing their views on elections on the day before elections, Nosik wrote on his [blog](#) Thursday.

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