

Bribes Reach \$5.9Bln

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Russians paid at least 164 billion rubles (\$5.9 billion) in bribes last year to buy off teachers, traffic policemen and others in "everyday" situations, almost double the level in 2001, the Economic Development Ministry said Tuesday.

The average bribe paid last year was 5,285 rubles, Deputy Minister Oleg Fomichev said. Corruption was most widespread in universities, followed by traffic police, army conscription and payoffs for admittance to kindergarten. The market for bribes, excluding those related to business, reached 129 billion rubles in 2005 from 84.8 billion rubles in 2001.

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