

U.S. National Endowment for Democracy Becomes Russia's First 'Undesirable Organization'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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NED'S NEW BETA SITE

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THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. Each year, NED makes more than 1,000 grants to support the projects of non-governmental groups abroad who are working for democratic goals in more than 90 countries.

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The NED has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on raising awareness of corruption and conducting training seminars in Russia.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a U.S.-based international organization that exists to promote democracy, was declared an “undesirable organization” Tuesday by Russia's Prosecutor General's Office, meaning all its activities are banned on Russian soil.

“Using the capabilities of Russian commercial and non-commercial organizations under its control, the National Endowment for Democracy participated in work to recognize election results as illegitimate, to organize political action with the goal of influencing government policy, and to discredit Russian army service,” the Prosecutor General's Office said in an online statement.

Prosecutors said the NED allocated \$5.2 million to Russian organizations in 2013-14 for these purposes, and concluded that it posed a threat “to the constitutional order of Russia, its defense and security.”

From now on, all the organization's work in Russia — including with any Russian organizations — will be banned.

The NED has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on raising awareness of corruption and conducting training seminars in Russia on issues such as local activism, women's rights and migrants' rights, according to its website.

The law on undesirable organizations was passed by the government in May in a move that was seen as signaling its growing fear of a foreign-inspired revolution. President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly claimed that the U.S. funds civil society organizations in countries around the world with the aim of destabilizing their ruling governments.

Earlier this month, senators of the Federation Council — the upper chamber of the Russian parliament — proposed a list of 12 foreign NGOs whose work they said posed a threat to national security and who should therefore be declared undesirable. The NED was one of them.

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