

Top Russian University Reportedly Bars Women From Leadership Role

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A faculty in one of Russia's top universities has been revealed to bar female students from becoming class monitors.

Varvara Mikhailova applied to become a class monitor on her first day of studies at the law faculty of the St. Petersburg branch of Russia's renowned Higher School of Economics (HSE) on Oct. 4.

Law school manager Mikhail Palamarchuk told her that "traditionally, only men can become class monitors," Mikhailova wrote on her Facebook page. He gave no further reasons for the "tradition," she wrote.

Mikhailova went on to demand a written affidavit to confirm that she was denied the position because of her gender, but was ultimately denied. The law school dean, Tatyana Alexeyeva, told her the tradition did not violate women's rights and advised her to "smile more," Mikhailova wrote.

“I came here to get juridical education. The last thing I expected to come across was gender discrimination, which is prohibited by our [Russian] Constitution,” Mikhailova wrote.

The student ultimately filed a formal request for a written affidavit confirming that women are not allowed to be class monitors in the school. She will receive a response within a month, the school administration said.

A spokeswoman for the HSE rector, Sophya Vanyatkina, told the Meduza news website that the university was investigating the incident, but agreed that denying a woman the opportunity to become class monitor was discrimination.

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