

Russia Probes BBC, Radio Liberty and Meduza for 'Drug Propaganda'

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Police are investigating three news outlets. **Moskva News Agency**

Police in Russia are investigating news outlets BBC Russian, Radio Liberty and Meduza after lawmakers accused them of promoting drug use, Interfax [reported](#) Thursday.

Ten foreign NGOs allegedly recruit activists to promote the decriminalization of drugs and the three outlets “actively cover” their rallies, State Duma deputy Vasily Piskaryov [said](#) at a session on foreign meddling. All of the mostly U.S.-based NGOs are blacklisted as “undesirable” under a 2015 law that allows Russian prosecutors to limit or halt their work.

“Foreign influence is aimed at increasing the number of drug users by forming a tolerant attitude toward drug use in the public, especially among children,” Piskaryov said Thursday.

“This poses a direct threat to our country’s demographic growth and the Russian public’s preservation of traditional moral values,” Piskaryov, who chairs the anti-meddling commission, said.

Related article: [Russia Adds U.S. News Site RFE/RL to 'Foreign Agent' Roster](#)

Russia's anti-drug police are inspecting BBC Russian, Radio Liberty and Meduza, along with other organizations, for propaganda surrounding drug use, the unit's chief Andrei Khrapov told Interfax.

Meduza's chief editor Ivan Kolpakov said in response to the announcement that the outlet doesn't publish news that promotes drug use.

"They will either not find it or try to plant it," Kolpakov [told](#) the Znak.com news website, alluding to the arrest last year of Meduza correspondent Ivan Golunov on fabricated drug charges.

Khrapov also [announced](#) the formation of online anti-drug propaganda units across the country Thursday.

The lower-house State Duma formed the special commission on foreign meddling in Russia after mass anti-government rallies swept Moscow last summer. Since then, it has accused [foreign news outlets](#), U.S. diplomats and Google of encouraging people to attend opposition protests.

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