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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

TRANSLATION OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION INTO ENGLISH

Russian is the state language of the Russian Federation¹ and all federal legislation is adopted and published in Russian. (Official publication of laws is required by the Constitution.²) There is no official translation of Russian laws into foreign languages and existing translations are fragmented. These translations are offered by selected government agencies, international and nongovernment organizations, and individual publishers. Most of the existing online translations are offered by subscription databases, which make their translated texts available through LexisNexis and Westlaw. Except in the case of a few competent publishers, the quality of these translations is dubious.³

I. Official Publications

Russian federal laws, acts issued by the legislature, government regulations, presidential decrees, international treaties, and rulings of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation are published in two major sources that are designated as official publishers of Russian legislation:

- SOBRANIE ZAKONODATELSTVA ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII [COLLECTION OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION LEGISLATION] (1994–), LC Call No. KLB7.R87.
- ROSSIISKAIA GAZETA [RUSSIAN NEWSPAPER] (1990–), LC Call No. not available, LC Control No. sn 91026628 (government-published daily newspaper, includes selected normative acts issued by federal executive agencies, rulings of the Supreme Courts, and some other acts).

Publications in the *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* are available online at <http://www.rg.ru>; however, it is not clear whether the online texts accessible through the newspaper's website are considered official. According to amendments to the Federal Law on Procedures for Publication and Entry into Force of Federal Constitutional Laws, Federal Laws, and Acts of the Federal Assembly of October 21, 2011, the government Internet portal of legal information at <http://www.pravo.gov.ru> is the official publisher of Russian legislation in electronic format.⁴

¹ KONSTITUTSIIA ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII [CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION] [KONST. RF] art. 68.1.

² *Id.* art. 15.

³ BURNHAM WILLIAM ET AL., LAW AND LEGAL SYSTEM OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION 48 (2004).

⁴ SOBRANIE ZAKONODATELSTVA ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII [SZ RF] 2011, No. 43, Item 5977.

II. Court Reporters

Rulings of the Russian Constitutional Court are published by two official sources mentioned above as well as in the Court's bulletin, and on the Court's website:

- KONSTITUTIONNYI SUD ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII [CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION], <http://www.ksrf.ru>.

Rulings and major decisions of the other two highest courts, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and the Highest Court of Arbitration, are published in Russian in their respective court bulletins:

- BIULLETEN VERKHOVNOGO SUDA ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII [BULLETIN OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION SUPREME COURT] (1992–), LC Call No. KLB18 .B58.
- VESTNIK VYSSHEGO ARBITRAZHNOGO SUDA ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII [HERALD OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION HIGHEST COURT OF ARBITRATION] (1992–), LC Call No. KLB1829.A13 V47.

Decisions of lower courts are published on their websites.

III. Translations of Laws

A. Code Compilations

Major Russian laws are passed in the form of codes, which serve as a compilation of major provisions regulating a specific field of law. Selected codes have been translated into English and published as individual books. Civil and criminal codes are more likely to be translated than others:

- GRAZHDANSKII KODEKS ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII: PARALLELNYE RUSSKII I ANGLIISKII TEKSTY / CIVIL CODE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: PARALLEL RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH TEXTS (Peter B. Maggs & Alexei N. Zhiltsov eds., trans., Norma, Moscow, 2003), LC Call No. KLB494.31994 .A52 2003 GLOBAL.
- CIVIL CODE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: PARTS ONE, TWO, AND THREE (William E. Butler ed., trans., Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford/New York, 2002), LC Call No. KLB494.31994 .A52 2002.
- CRIMINAL CODE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (William E. Butler trans., Kluwer Law International, Boston, 3d ed. 1999), LOC Call No. KLB3794.31996 .A52 1999 GLOBAL.
- Sarah J. Reynolds, *Criminal Code of the Russian Federation*, in 39(4), 39(6) STATUTES AND DECISIONS: THE LAWS OF THE USSR AND ITS SUCCESSOR STATES, July–Aug., Nov.–Dec. 2003.

Translations of other codes, such as the Criminal Procedure Code, Criminal Correctional Code, Tax Code, Family Code, Labor Code, and Land Code, can be found in the collection of the Law Library of Congress.

B. Individual Laws

Translations of certain individual laws can be found in major publications on Russian law. For example, the Law on Activities of Attorneys and on Advokatura can be found here:

- WILLIAM E. BUTLER, *THE RUSSIAN LEGAL PRACTITIONER* (Eleven International Publishing, The Hague; International Specialized Book Services, Portland, 2011), LOC Call No. KLB1630 .B88 2011.

Similarly, major laws regulating corporate activities, copyright, and international relations are available in specific publications examining Russia's legal developments in individual areas. For instance, the Russian Federal Law on International Treaties of the Russian Federation can be found in English translation in the following source:

- WILLIAM E. BUTLER, *THE RUSSIAN LAW OF TREATIES* (Simmonds & Hill, London, 1997), LOC Call No. KLB2400.A31995 B88 1997 EAST.

Laws, government regulations, orders issued by individual ministerial offices, and international treaties related to exploration of natural resources can be found in English in the following periodical:

- *RUSSIA & NIS: BASIC OIL LAWS & CONTRACTS: ORIGINAL TEXTS* (Barrows, New York, 1993–), LOC Call No. KLA3366.A28 1993.

C. Comprehensive Collections

The most comprehensive collections of translations in all areas of Russian law include the following:

- WILLIAM E. BUTLER, *RUSSIA & THE REPUBLICS LEGAL MATERIALS* (Penn. State Univ., Juris Publishing, 2006–), LC Call No. KLA13 2006 GLOBAL. This publication is a regularly updated continuation of translations previously published by Columbia University.
- *STATUTES AND DECISIONS: THE LAWS OF THE USSR AND ITS SUCCESSOR STATES* (M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1991–), LC Call No. K23 .O9. This publication includes various acts that have become available for translation. Some issues include acts selected by relevance to the given topic.

IV. Translations of Court Decisions

Court judgments are usually not translated into English. Selected rulings of commercial courts are translated and published by major Russian commercial legal databases, such as Garant

(see section VI) and Kodeks. Some documents related to the judiciary, court practice, and selected rulings of the Supreme Court, including the historic 2003 decision on the application of international law principles by Russian regular courts, are published in English on the website of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation:

- *English: Documents*, SUPREME COURT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, <http://www.supcourt.ru/catalog.php?c1=English&c2=Documents>.

V. Online Resources

Translations of Russian laws published online appear to be very fragmented. Most of the existing resources cover only one specific field of law. This is especially true for websites maintained by individual government ministries. A limited number of major documents related to a particular agency's jurisdiction can be found at the following sites:

- THE CENTRAL BANK OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, <http://www.cbr.ru/eng>.
- CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, <http://cikrf.ru/eng/>.
- FEDERAL ANTIMONOPOLY SERVICE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, <http://en.fas.gov.ru/legislation/>.
- FEDERAL CUSTOMS SERVICE, <http://www.russian-customs.org/legislation/mlacts/index.html>.
- MINISTRY OF TAXATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, <http://www.garweb.ru/project/mns/en/law/>.

Selected international organizations and companies maintain databases of national laws for the countries participating in these organizations or where a company is operating. Relevant sources for Russian law include the following:

- LEGISLATIONLINE.ORG, <http://www.legislationline.org/>. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe provides access to Russian laws on human rights issues, citizenship and immigration, elections, and law enforcement.
- *Competition Policy & Law Database*, ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC), <http://www.apec.org.tw/doc/Russia.html#Competition>. The Russia section of this database offers a collection of Russian laws, regulations, and decisions on competition policies and consumer protection.
- *Intelligence Related Laws and Edicts*, FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/russia/docs/index.html>, contains a collection of Russian laws on intelligence and antiterrorism activities. Unfortunately, most of these translations are outdated and do not reflect recent amendments.
- ERNST & YOUNG, <http://www.tax.eycis.info/>, provides a comprehensive database of translations that contains documents on tax and financial matters as well as general

normative acts. The database features current and previous versions of documents. Access to the database is free but requires registration.

Commercial legal databases offer a good, though not comprehensive, collection of translated texts. However, because these documents are not freely available, it is difficult to assess their quality in general:

- GARANT, <http://english.garant.ru/legislation/>, is a legal reference database that appears to be most commonly used in Russia. It claims to translate into English and publish about forty documents weekly.
- RUSSIANGOST, <http://www.russiagost.com>, is a database that advertises itself as the largest Russian online law library in English. According to its website, it contains over 20,000 translated regulatory documents.

Websites and private blogs maintained by individuals can also be used as a resource for locating translations of Russian laws:

- *Normative Acts of the RF in English*, YURIDICHESKII BLOG [LEGAL BLOG], <http://fin-lawyer.ru/2008/normativnye-pravovye-akty-rf-na-anglijskom-yazyke/>, appears to be a blog maintained by a private Russian attorney, and is the most diverse collection of links to websites containing free versions of translated Russian legal texts.
- USLUGI.RU, <http://jslugi.ru/legislationru>, is a Moscow law firm that provides its clients with translations of business laws.

Prepared by Peter Roudik
Director of Legal Research
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