

New "law on the protection of the Russian language": legal implications for foreigners



Русская версия

The "Law on the Protection of the Russian Language" was passed on 24 June 2025 – a Russian Federal Law, with which the government aims to limit the use of foreign words in Russia's public space (hereinafter the "**Language Law**").

Below we will examine the legal implications this holds for foreign businesses in Russia.

1. Background and goals of the Language Law

According to the drafters of the Language Law, in Russia today one can see *"aggressive use of signboards, inscriptions, information on upcoming events, discounts, and sales in foreign languages"*.^[1]

Such signboards, again in the opinion of the drafters, *"everywhere abound in attention-grabbing foreign words"*.^[2]

The authors of the Language Law also clearly state the goal of their law: *"to substantially limit the use of 'anglicisms' and foreign words throughout Russia, and primarily in the public space"*.^[3]

Below we examine the amendments in greater detail.

2. Consumer market

2.1 Initial regulation

The Russian Law on the Protection of Consumer Rights^[4] (hereinafter the "**Consumer Protection Law**") initially specified two categories of information that must be provided to the consumer in Russian on a mandatory basis: information on the manufacturer and on the goods (work, services).

2.2 Innovations

The Language Law introduces a new category of information – "information intended to be read publicly by consumers" (hereinafter "**Public Information**")^[5] i.e. information that the seller (or the manufacturer, or contractor) posts in publicly accessible places or communicates to the public at large using:

- signboards,
- other means of posting information, including: inscriptions, directional signs, external surfaces, sign plates, information labels, structures, facilities, hardware, and so on.

In other words, this covers any possible informational media used in retail trade or household and other consumer services.

Public Information must be given in the Russian language.^[6]

The Explanatory Note to the Language Law states that as a result of its passage *"it should no longer be possible for signs and shop windows to use such inscriptions as, for example, "coffee", "fresh", "sale", "shop", "open" and so on"*.^[7]

However, the new Clause 3 of Article 10¹ of the Consumer Protection Law introduces the following provision: at the discretion of the manufacturer (contractor, seller), public information may also be executed in foreign languages.

Thus, *de jure* the new Language Law does not prohibit the use of foreign words in Public Information, but merely requires that they be duplicated on an equal basis with Russian words, and one should not rely on the

ideas given in the Explanatory Note on the prohibition of the words "sale", "shop" and so on, as these ideas did not make it into the final law.

Let us look at some examples of the use of correct and incorrect designations in Public Information, with due consideration for the new requirements:

Correct		Incorrect
Russian version only	Russian version + foreign version (for example, English)	Foreign version only
кофе	coffee / кофе	coffee
свежий	fresh / свежий	fresh
(рас)продажа	sale / (рас)продажа	sale
магазин	shop / магазин	shop
открыто	open / открыто	open

However, the requirements of the new Language Law do not apply to advertising structures and advertising – Russian law already specifies mandatory requirements on the use of Russian in advertising.^[8]

3. Naming of real estate properties in Russia

As concerns the naming of real estate properties, the new Language Law encroaches not only on signs about discounts in shop windows, but has *de facto* partially limited the use of an entire category of intellectual property – the trade name.

3.1 Initial regulation

In accordance with Article 1538 of the Russian Civil Code, entrepreneurs^[9] may use trade designations to identify the enterprises that they own.

Such names are not company names, and for this reason are not included in the Russian commercial register.^[10]

Trade names may consist of words, images, or a combination thereof.^[11]

The right to a trade name arises without the need for registration, provided two conditions are met: (1) it is in actual use to identify an

enterprise (for example, a restaurant or shop) and (2) it is known within the bounds of a specific territory.

3.2 Innovations

In the Explanatory Note to the Language Law, the authors state that it is *"aimed at terminating the practice of giving residential complexes ... names in foreign languages or using derivatives of foreign words and expressions"*.^[12]

In the Language Law as adopted, this goal was not *de facto* entirely achieved.

The Language Law introduces the new term "name of an object (group of objects) of capital construction, name of a low-rise residential complex".

This "name" is now understood to be the trade name that the developer plans to use in advertising, and which should be executed using only Cyrillic letters.

Thus, in no way is this a ban on the use of foreign or foreign-derived words to name residential complexes – it will simply be required that they be transliterated using the Cyrillic alphabet.

An important addendum is that this requirement will not extend to sites that have already been commissioned before the Language Law goes into effect.

4. Cultural expansion abroad

Another novelty of the new Language Law concerns the declarative provisions to the effect that Russia will raise the stature of the Russian language and Russian culture worldwide.

These novelties bring no legal consequences for foreigners.

5. Dates of entry into force of the Language Law

The provisions of the Language Law concerning the consumer market and real estate properties enter into force from 1 March 2026.

The declarative provisions on cultural expansion enter into force from the day of publication of the law, i.e. from 24 June 2025.

ADVANT Beiten is always at your disposal should you have any questions related to the protection of the rights and lawful interests of foreigners in Russia.

[1]. Explanatory Note to the draft federal law "On Amending the Federal Law 'On the State Language of the Russian Federation' and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation", p. 2.

[2]. *ibid.*

[3]. *ibid.*

[4]. Law No. 2300-1 of the Russian Federation dated 7 February 1992 "On the Protection of Consumer Rights".

[5]. New Clause 1 of Article 10¹ of the Consumer Protection Law.

[6]. New Clause 2 of Article 10¹ of the Consumer Protection Law. In addition, such information may be duplicated in the state languages of the republics that are part of Russia and in the languages of the peoples of Russia (there is no comprehensive official list of such languages).

[7]. Explanatory Note to the draft federal law "On Amending the Federal Law 'On the State Language of the Russian Federation' and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation", p. 4.

[8]. Article 3(10) of Federal Law No. 53-FZ dated 1 June 2005 "On the State Language of the Russian Federation".

[9]. Including non-profit organisations given the right to engage in such activity by their foundation documents in accordance with the law.

[10]. The Unified State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs.

[11]. Clause 177 of Ruling No. 10 of the Plenary Session of the Russian Supreme Court dated 23 April 2019 "On the Application of Part Four of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation".

[12]. Explanatory Note to the draft federal law "On Amending the Federal Law 'On the State Language of the Russian Federation' and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation", p. 5.

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