

The situation in Russia from a political and legal point of view remains difficult and continues to worsen. Over the past year and a half, Russian authorities have made numerous changes to military legislation. It is noteworthy that even in 2021, such changes could have caused a wave of indignation and civil protests, but after February 24, 2022, Russian society plunged into deep apathy.

All the threats promised over the past 10–15 years have become reality. The usual conscription for military service, which takes place in Russia twice a year, is now perceived as a separate opportunity to go to war. The mobilization announced by Vladimir Putin in September 2022 continues. Russian authorities have adopted amendments changing the rules for notifying conscripts and have begun to develop an electronic registry to simplify registration of such people for the purposes of their conscription. The changes also affected other aspects: the conscription age was changed from the current 18–27 years to 18–30 years. Moreover, administrative fines for violations of military registration rules and ignoring calls from the military registration and enlistment office were also increased. Fines have appeared for legal entities for failure to provide detailed information about their employees who are subject to conscription for military service. Methods have appeared in the actions of the military registration and enlistment office that cannot be quickly and effectively appealed: the actions of forcibly delivering a conscript to the military registration and enlistment office and instantly sending him to his place of military service in violation of all kinds of laws and regulations have already become traditional. Military registration and enlistment offices and their employees realize that they will not bear any responsibility for the forced conscription of citizens for military service. The priority for military registration and enlistment offices is not the lives of people, but the numbers that are reflected in the reports after the end of the conscription

campaign. Unfortunately, in certain issues of interaction with the military registration and enlistment office, referring to the current Russian legislation becomes useless.

In turn, the mobilization, which is still ongoing, threatens the life and health of most men aged 18 to 55 years. There are virtually no clear criteria for conscription for mobilization, and returning home from the war is almost impossible. Lawyers are waging an unequal struggle, clinging to any explanation from the Russian Ministry of Defense in order to return a serviceman home from the war zone. Separately, the Russian authorities continue to use the principle of intimidation: in September, the head of the defense committee, Andrei Kartapolov, announced amendments to the Russian criminal code in order to add a separate article for ignoring calls from the military registration and enlistment office for mobilization. To date, such a bill has not been introduced, but we believe that it is just a matter of time. If an article appears in the criminal code for failure to appear at mobilization events when called by the military registration and enlistment office, then for most people in Russia the issue of emigration will become the highest priority on the agenda.

Citizens of Russia, subject to both conscription and mobilization, are under constant stress both because of changing legislation and because of the inability to effectively resist the state represented by military registration and enlistment offices. The current alarming situation leads to an understandable desire to look for a permanent place of residence in another country. Until now, Russians can quickly travel to Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan using an internal passport. Certain countries such as Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Georgia require a passport for foreign travel. This passport, if it has not been issued in advance, is not issued just like that. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, which in Russia is the responsible body for issuing passports, often, in violation of the law, requires a document

from the military registration and enlistment office stating that a person is not subject to conscription for military service. This practice is illegal, but appealing the actions of employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs takes a lot of time.

In turn, emigration is not available to everyone. Of course, most Russian citizens cannot afford to leave the country. Such citizens remain not because they support Putin and his policies, but because they do not have the opportunity to do so. It is noteworthy that problems arise both for Russians who left and for those who remained. And by coincidence, the majority of these citizens are precisely those who oppose the war and call for the speedy signing of peace agreements.

Unfortunately, the actions of both states and private campaigns undertaken over the past year and a half show more of an emotional, but not a rational response to the events that have begun. Most citizens who have left face difficulties in obtaining documents for permanent residence, opening bank accounts, transporting children to kindergartens or schools, and many other problems. Citizens remaining in the country are forced to endure the above-described risks emanating from the authorities of the Russian Federation. At the same time, they observe the difficulties that arise for those who left and decide to refuse

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A striking example of such actions are the September clarifications of the EU Government - the European Commission, which were formulated so broadly that they allowed states in Europe to arbitrarily interpret them. Thus, the Baltic countries announced that they will definitely detain cars with Russian license plates. Other countries, such as Germany, abandoned this idea, although precedents for the confiscation of cars also occurred in Germany in July-August. One can easily understand the sentiments of Russians who see that EU sanctions primarily hit citizens with anti-war views, but not those not close to the Kremlin, who do not face the problems described above.

### **What do Russian citizens expect from Germany and the EU?**

I believe that one of the only options remains the recognition of potential conscientious objectors to military service, who remain in danger of ending up in conscript service or in the regular army under a mobilization procedure that is discriminated against by the group. The conscientious objector movement has a separate goal of interacting with the states of the European Union in order to simplify the procedure for issuing humanitarian visas for those conscientious objectors who are at greatest risk. We understand that it is impossible to transport all men of military age to European countries, but we can establish criteria by which men at greatest risk will be able to leave the country and not participate in the war.

Thank you