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Russia’s parliament may debate a pilot for online wine sales on Nov. 10 or 11

The bills would carve out a narrow exception to the alcohol e-commerce ban for Russian-made wine shipped through Russian Post

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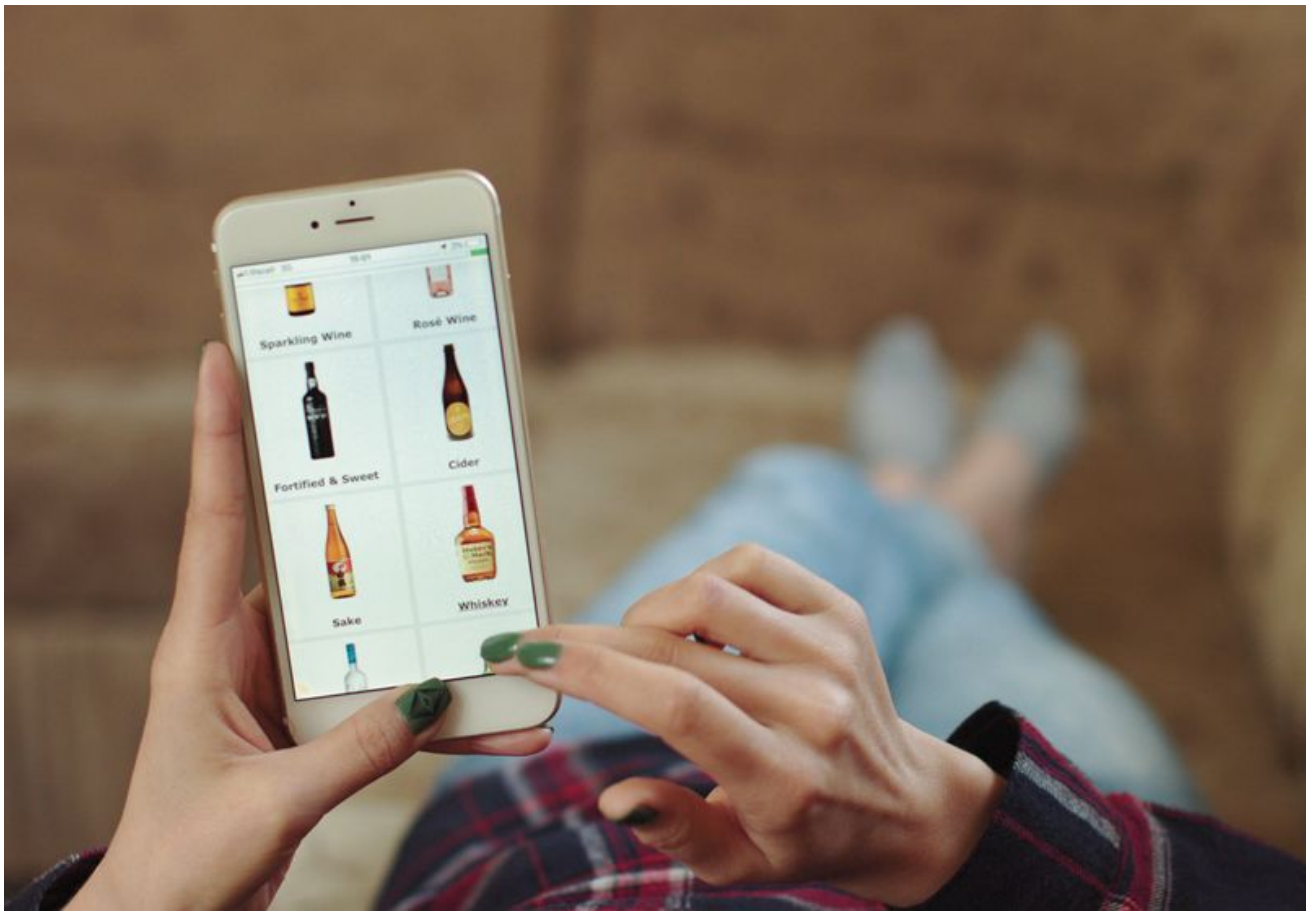

Russia’s lower house of parliament could consider bills on November 10 or 11 that would allow an experimental system for online wine sales, Agriculture Minister Oksana Lut said, according to Interfax Russia.

The proposals would create a limited exception to Russia’s ban on remote alcohol sales by allowing Russian wine to be sold online under a pilot program. Interfax reported that the sales would be handled through Russian Post, making the state postal operator the channel for the trial.

If the bills reach the State Duma floor on those dates, they would mark a fresh step in a long-running debate over whether Russia should permit any form of e-commerce for alcoholic beverages. Current rules broadly prohibit distance sales of alcohol, and that ban has kept wine, beer and spirits out of mainstream online retail even as e-commerce has expanded in other consumer categories.

Lut said the legislation could be discussed on November 10 or 11, Interfax reported. The agency’s account did not say whether lawmakers had settled on one of the two dates or whether any final vote would follow immediately after the debate.

The bills concern wine rather than the wider alcohol market. Based on the details reported by Interfax, the experiment would apply to Russian-made wines, not imported products. That distinction matters for the beverage industry because it could give domestic wineries access to a new regulated sales channel while imported wine remains outside the test. If implemented, the pilot could also strengthen the position of local producers in a market where route-to-consumer rules can shape competition as much as pricing and distribution.

The use of Russian Post would place the state at the center of the trial’s logistics and compliance system. That could help authorities monitor where the wine is shipped, who receives it and whether the model can operate within Russia’s broader alcohol control framework. At the same time, relying on a single operator would mean the experiment is likely to be narrower than a full opening of online alcohol commerce.

The possible Duma debate is significant for producers, distributors and retailers because it would test whether Russia is willing to loosen a long-standing restriction in a highly controlled way rather than through a broad market liberalization. For wineries, especially domestic producers that have pushed for wider access to consumers, an approved pilot could offer a new sales outlet and a way to reach buyers outside major urban store networks. For traditional retailers and distributors, it could signal the start

of a policy shift that may later extend beyond wine, though no such expansion was described in the Interfax report.

The proposal also fits a broader policy pattern in which Russian authorities have looked for ways to support domestic agricultural and food producers while keeping close oversight of sales channels. By limiting the experiment to Russian wine and assigning fulfillment to Russian Post, lawmakers would be testing not only online alcohol sales but also a more state-managed model for how those sales could work.

Much remains unclear. Interfax did not report how large the pilot would be, which regions would be covered, what kinds of wines would qualify or how age verification and delivery controls would be enforced in practice. It also did not say whether the government expects the experiment to begin soon after passage or only after additional regulations are issued.

Even so, the scheduling of a possible Duma discussion suggests that the issue remains active on the legislative agenda after years of periodic debate. For Russia’s wine sector, that keeps open the prospect of a controlled online channel that could change how domestic bottles reach consumers. For the broader drinks market, it is an early signal that regulators may be willing to test a narrowly tailored exception to the distance-sales ban without opening online trade to all alcohol categories at once.