

MOSCOW, March 2020

The State Duma (Lower Chamber of the Russian Parliament) passed a bill allowing transfer of convicts to penitentiary facilities located near places of residence of their close relatives in a final third reading on Thursday.

**The amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure have been developed by Russia's Justice Ministry in collaboration with Tatiana Moskalkova, the Federal Human Rights Commissioner, with the aim to humanize the criminal procedure legislation and preserve socially useful connections of convicts.**

The bill envisages that federal penal administrations are to be empowered to permit convicts to be transferred to penitentiary facilities in the regions, where close relatives thereof have their places of residence on condition that convicts or their relatives with the convict's consent petition for such a transfer and if the respective facility is equipped to accommodate such a convict. In case the facility has no vacancies, the convict may be transferred to a penitentiary facility in a neighboring region.

Close relatives are spouses, parents, children, adopters or adoptive children, blood brothers and sisters, grandparents, grandchildren.

The bill is aimed at the improvement of the penal policies and preservation of socially useful connections of convicts.

In the framework of the most recent Concept of Development of Russia's Penal System for the period up to 2020 it is envisaged to introduce certain rules granting access to penitentiary facilities for relatives of convicts, as well as those taking into account the health status and other circumstances of convicts when decisions on their transfer to penitentiary facilities near home are to be taken.