

X5 Gets Antitrust Nod for Kopeika Bid

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 09, 2010

The  Moscow Times

X5 Retail Group, the country's largest food retailer, received anti-monopoly approval to buy all of its smaller competitor Trade House Kopeika, X5 chief Lev Khasis said Thursday.

X5 will have to avoid exceeding 25 percent market share in any region where it operates, Khasis said by phone. The limitation means that the Moscow-based retailer won't be able to sell food in about 20 Kopeika stores, or about 3 percent of the chain, and may swap them for outlets in other regions, he said.

"Approval from the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service doesn't mean we have a deal," Khasis said. "With this approval, we can continue talks with our counterparties and reach an agreement. The road is open but we still need to walk it."

Khasis declined to give a time frame or price for a potential deal.

Vedomosti reported in June that Kopeika owner Nikolai Tsvetkov might seek an initial public offering for the retailer this year or sell the company. U.S. retail giant Walmart was seen as a

possible buyer, the report said.

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