

Russia to Host Hockey Worlds

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Moscow and St. Petersburg won the right to stage the 2016 world ice hockey championship on Friday, the latest in a series of international sporting events to be awarded to the world's largest country.

"The event will take place from April 29 to May 15, 2016, and coincide with the 70-year anniversary of Russian ice hockey," the sport's world governing body said on its web site.

The Russians had been favorites to land the 2016 tournament after Prime Minister Vladimir Putin arrived at the current world championship in Bratislava on Friday to throw his weight behind their campaign.

The IIHF congress in Bratislava voted for Russia after two other bidders for 2016, Denmark and Ukraine, withdrew their nominations.

"I can promise you that the world championship will be staged at the highest level," Putin told delegates in English, adding that all players, officials and fans would get top-quality service and free transportation to and from arenas. "Russia has fully deserved to stage this championship."

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