

Poland and Russia Insist Hooligans Won't Hurt Ties

By [Nikolaus von Twickel](#)

June 13, 2012



Mikhail Fedotov

Moscow and Warsaw tried to assuage fears Wednesday that bloody clashes between football hooligans in the Polish capital will negatively affect Russo-Polish ties.

President Vladimir Putin's human rights ombudsman Mikhail Fedotov told reporters in Warsaw that both sides agreed to avoid such scenes in the future.

"We feel it is extremely important not to deepen the conflict but to do everything to make this a thing of the past," he was quoted as saying by Itar-Tass.

Putin had dispatched the ombudsman after the clashes began ahead of Tuesday's football match against Russia. In the worst violence in the European championship so far, police detained 184 people, including 156 Poles and 24 Russians.

Fedotov was speaking after talks with Poland's Interior Minister Jacek Cichocki, who said

in separate comments that he hoped the courts would severely punish the Polish hooligans and that Russian participants would be banned from the country.

"When it comes to our hooligans, I hope the prosecutors, and especially the courts, will be strict and these people will fully feel the consequences of their antics," Cichocki was quoted as saying by Reuters.

The minister said the detained Russians would face accelerated court proceedings and would likely be expelled from Poland and banned from returning to Europe's border-free Schengen zone for five years.

The Foreign Ministry blamed Polish provocateurs for the clashes and called upon Warsaw to provide for the safety of all fans.

"We sincerely hope that ... Polish authorities take all necessary means and that the remaining matches will be a real feast for all football fans," the ministry said in a [statement](#) on its website.

Fedotov said that apart from hooligans, Polish "politicians who make themselves a name for confrontation with Russia" were also to blame.

Relations with Poland have been complicated by centuries of conflict and the Soviet domination of Poland for more than four decades after World War II.

The clashes coincided with Russia's national holiday, and Fedotov suggested marking June 12 with a friendly match between both countries' teams in the future. "Let this day become a sporting holiday," he said. It was unclear if the Polish side had taken up the suggestion.

The Warsaw clashes were not the first violent incident in the ongoing Euro 2012 championship in Poland and Ukraine. After last Friday's match against the Czech Republic, Russian fans got into a brawl with stadium guards in Wroclaw, Poland.

The European Football Association on Wednesday fined Russia \$150,000 for the incident and warned that it would be docked six points in qualifying for the next European Championship if fans stepped out of line again, Reuters reported.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/06/13/poland-and-russia-insist-hooligans-wont-hurt-ties-a15427>