

Putin Backs Creation of Adoption Database

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin said Friday that he supports creating a national database of prospective adoptive parents and organizing a nationwide conference of orphanage headmasters, proposals aimed at improving care and reducing the number of Russian orphans in state wardship.

More than 125,000 Russian orphans live in state institutions, and the government has been under pressure to find more humane alternatives since banning U.S. adoptions on Jan. 1 in an apparent tit-for-tat prompted by a U.S. law that calls for sanctions on Russians suspected of rights abuses.

Critics said the ban put politics before children. U.S. families have adopted an estimated 60,000 Russians in the past two decades, but Russian officials have described the practice as unpatriotic, corrupt and unsafe, citing the deaths of 20 adoptees and the mistreatment of several others.

About 18,000 Russian families are waiting to adopt or raise an orphan, but the government "doesn't know who they are and doesn't see them because they're in different regions and there isn't a unified database," children's ombudsman Pavel Astakhov told Putin at a meeting at the president's Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow, according to a transcript of their [conversation](#).

"It's not difficult, and it would probably work," Putin said of Astakhov's proposal to create such a database.

Putin also offered to help Astakhov organize an all-Russia conference of orphanage headmasters, something the children's ombudsman described as a Soviet-era tradition worth reviving. "I'll speak to my colleagues in the ministry. I think they'll respond favorably," Putin said, referring to the Education and Science Ministry.

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