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MTS Seeks to Ease Olympic Restrictions on LTE

By The Moscow Times

June 27, 2013



MTS, one of Russia's top three mobile operators, has asked the State Radio Frequencies Commission to ease restrictions on the development of LTE services in the Krasnodar region related to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Interfax reported Thursday.

In March last year, the commission decided that MegaFon and Rostelecom, general partners of the Olympics, would have exclusive rights to provide LTE services in the region until December 31, 2016. But in July, the Federal Communications and IT Oversight Service held a tender for LTE frequencies in which MTS, VimpelCom, MegaFon and Rostelecom were awarded licenses. This means that even if an operator builds a network, it will not be able to start providing services.

MTS proposed that the commission bring the duration of the Olympics frequency restrictions in line with the conditions of the LTE licenses and limit the restrictions to the area where the games would be held.

The Communications and Press Ministry has given a negative opinion on MTS's request while the Defense Ministry has approved it, according to documents prepared for a meeting of the State Radio Frequencies Commission.

The commission has not yet made a decision on the request.

In addition to the top three mobile operators and Rostelecom, LTE frequencies in the region are held by Scartel and Osnova Telecom, which is 75 percent owned by Vitaly Yusufov's Icominvest.

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