

FIFA to Investigate 12 Football Matches in Russia for Match-Fixing

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Twelve football matches in Russia are among several hundred worldwide that have been identified by the sport's world governing body FIFA as being possibly fixed, the country's sports minister said Thursday.

Match-fixing is thought to be common in Russian football, although not on the same scale as in the 1990s, but the culprits are rarely held to account.

"Two years ago FIFA implemented a match-fixing warning system," minister Vitaly Mutko said. "Over this time around 400-500 such games were identified as suspicious, including about 12 of our football games," he added.

He didn't say which matches were under scrutiny, only that two games were "resonant," but explained that the Russia, which will host the 2018 World Cup, has increased its efforts to combat the scourge in recent years.

"We see that illogical bets are made, and this immediately enters the monitoring system," he said. "Having received the signal, football authorities send commissars, replace the match officials, and so on," Mutko added.

In an attempt to clean up the domestic game, President Vladimir Putin in July signed legislation that toughens the maximum punishment for match-fixing to seven years in prison.

The law, proposed by Putin himself in January, makes it an offense for athletes, coaches and sports officials from betting on their own sports and couples prison time with a maximum 1 million ruble (\$30,000) fine for those convicted.

The FIFPro international players' association claimed last year that as many as one in ten footballers in Russia has at some point received an offer to fix a game.

But in April, the Russian Premier League urged the media to refrain from jumping to conclusions on match-fixing whenever a shock result occurs.

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