

Authorities Should Have Waited With Gay Propaganda Law, Minister Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said that the government should have waited until after the 2014 Olympics to institute the law against gay propaganda.

"It was possible to estimate what public response it would arouse in the West, especially on the threshold of the Sochi Olympics," Mutko said in an interview with RBK Daily published Friday

The sports minister went on to say that the negative public reaction to the legislation followed widespread international suspicion towards Russia.

"Russia is picking up steam in all fields, including athletics. No one in the world needs this. They liked it when we were weak. And now we are gradually taking our place," Mutko said.

As the discussion turned to the upcoming Sochi Olympics, the sports minister predicted that

the Russian team will come in fourth place in the medals race with "seven to eight gold medals."

Women's speed-skating, skeleton, cross-country sprint and figure skating are likely victories while bobsled, luge, biathlon and hockey are considered "possible awards," although Russia has not set specific medal-winning target, Mutko said.

Asked why a first-place finish isn't under discussion, Mutko named a number of obstacles that Russian athletics has to overcome — including insufficient facilities, the flight of qualified trainers abroad and antiquated training methods — but affirmed Russia's plans to return to the top three of international athletics by 2020.

"Now everything is changing due to the fact that we have held major international competitions in our country," Mutko said, explaining that many of the facilities built for these competitions are seen as a "future inheritance."

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