

German President Won't Attend Sochi Olympics

By [The Moscow Times](#)

December 08, 2013



The German President has not visited Russia since taking up office. **Sebastian Hillig**

Der Spiegel reported Sunday that German President Joachim Gauck would boycott the Olympic Games in Sochi in protest of human rights violations and the harassment of Russian opposition political figures. The magazine said the Russian government was informed of his decision last week.

The DPA news agency said presidential spokeswoman Ferdos Forudastan confirmed on Sunday the president would not be attending the Olympics but presidential officials denied the move is political, saying there is "nothing unusual" about skipping the event, Reuters reported.

Gauck, an outspoken critic of Russia's human rights record, is yet to visit the country since taking office in March 2012. A planned meeting with President Vladimir Putin in June 2012 fell

through, apparently for scheduling reasons.

Gauck did travel to the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in London last year.

Material from The Moscow Times is included in this report.

This article was updated on Monday Dec.9 at 11:07 a.m.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/08/german-president-wont-attend-sochi-olympics-a30284>