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Red Square Gets Protection From Marketing Campaigns

By The Moscow Times

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Soldiers on Red Square in front of the shopping center GUM. **Maxim Stulov**

President Vladimir Putin has put some additional red tape around Red Square to protect it from colossal consumer showcases, signing a set of rules to regulate events that may be held at the country's iconic site, a Kremlin aide said Thursday.

The presidential order, which comes on top of previous guidelines for Red Square events, outlines an "algorithm" for deciding "what can and cannot be done on Red Square," head of the presidential property department Vladimir Kozhin told Rossia 24 television. Kozhin did not specify the details of the new procedure.

"High-class concerts," such as last June's performance by opera singers Anna Netrebko and Dmitry Hvorostovsky, or the ice-skating rink that has "become a trademark of Moscow on New Year's Eve" would still be welcome, Kozhin said.

But conspicuous consumerism, such as the 30-meter-long, 9-meter-tall exhibit of Louis Vuitton luggage that drew resentment from many Russians and ridicule from others, would not.

"The appearance of that suitcase certainly has not damaged the country's security and reputation, but the organizers ... have violated the rather strict protocol that we observe," Kozhin said.

Russian authorities ordered the Vuitton structure dismantled just a day after it was completed in November, following outcry by nationalists and Communists in parliament.

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