

Ex-Moscow Mayor Luzhkov Wants In on Russian McDonald's Project

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Former Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov has offered to become a meat and grain supplier for a fast food chain that two celebrated Russian film directors plan to open as a domestic alternative to McDonald's, a news report said Monday.

Luzhkov, who has been involved in farm development in Russia's western Kaliningrad exclave since stepping down as mayor, has offered to supply “environmentally clean products,” including lamb, buckwheat, oats and wheat, for the chain, tentatively named “Yedim Doma!” (“Eat at Home!”), that award-winning directors Andrei Konchalovsky and Nikita Mikhalkov plan to open, Izvestia reported.

Luzhkov insisted that “Yedim Doma!” — whose name appeals to Russians' patriotism amid a standoff with the West over Ukraine — had a chance of becoming more successful than the previous attempt at creating a Russian alternative to McDonald's, which he had supported as mayor in the 1990s, Izvestia reported.

The previous project, “Russian Bistro,” appeared in the capital in 1995, only to shut down its three dozen restaurants a decade later, according to the report.

Luzhkov was quoted as saying that the idea of creating a “network of domestic fast food” was good, and ambition brought down “Russian Bistro.”

“Organizers of the chain wanted to make money very fast from the cafes, and proposed in the mid-1990s to raise prices on the menu, and I refused that,” Luzhkov said, Izvestia reported. “We couldn't find the golden middle ground that would have satisfied both the Moscow authorities and the entrepreneurs.”

Unlike “Russian Bistro,” which received no state financing, the film directors have reportedly already secured government funding for “Yedim Doma!”

The brand “Yedim Doma!” already belongs to Konchalovsky’s wife, television presenter Yulia Vysotskaya, who — in addition to owning two restaurants in Moscow — hosts a cooking show on the NTV network and sells frozen vegetables and berries under the brand.

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