

Putin Approves Plan to Merge Anti-Monopoly Watchdog With Rival Agency

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday approved a proposal by the prime minister to have the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service (FAS) absorb the Federal Tariffs Service (FTS), against the advice of the Economic Development Ministry.

The FAS is responsible for enforcing competition laws in finance, trade and advertising, as well as other spheres, while the FTS monitors prices in a range of industries and the activity of natural state-run monopolies in such sectors as electricity, gas and rail services.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said that combining the two agencies would boost efficiency and eliminate overlapping functions.

"They essentially perform very similar tasks," Medvedev said during a meeting with the president, according to a statement on the government website.

The merger runs counter to previous recommendations by the Economic Development

Ministry. The ministry said in an internal document last August that incompetence in the FAS had led to "a number of systematic problems," news agency RBC reported.

The ministry recommended that the agency either be split up, with its departments distributed among other federal agencies, or else that its authority be severely curtailed.

In a draft version of the document cited by newspaper Vedomosti in early 2014, ministry experts noted that after six years of work by the FAS, only 24 percent of entrepreneurs believed the conditions for competition among Russian businesses were improving.

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