

Patriarch's Visit Cancels Bike Race

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An international bicycle marathon in the central Russian town of Plyos had to be postponed after it was announced that Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill would be visiting the town on the same day, the event's organizers announced on their website.

The Plyos Velomathon, a bicycle event run by bikers' community Veloshturm with the support of the local authorities, was scheduled to take place on July 19. According to a post on the Velomathon's website, the local administration and regional sports department approached the organizers at the end of June with a request to postpone the event, as it happened to coincide with the arrival of the patriarch.

The marathon was subsequently moved to July 26.

"Our points that the date of the competition had been set and agreed on a year ago, that we are expecting 500 participants from all over the country and international athletes, that people have already been booking their hotel rooms and buying their train and air tickets, that our advertising campaign has long been launched and our funds have been spent were not deemed valid," the organizers wrote on their website.

The church leader, who stopped in Plyos en route to the diocese of Kostroma, sailed into town

on a private yacht on Sunday and was welcomed at his arrival by an orchestra, local news site VSE42 reported. According to the site, he is expected to be in Plyos until Wednesday.

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