

Russian Store Recalls Toy Hedgehogs With Pink 'Holes' on Their Bellies

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Sales of toys such as the hedgehogs from Vladimir stores are “done intentionally to corrupt the nation starting from early childhood,” he was quoted by TV-Mig as saying.

A chain store in central Russia has withdrawn toy hedgehogs from sale after consumers complained about pink “holes” on the stuffed animals' bellies — apertures that were designed to represent bellybuttons, but which critics said looked like female genitalia.

The Globus children's department store in the Vladimir region has conceded a design gaffe with the toys, photographs of which have prompted lampooning and laments online, the regional children's rights ombudsman Gennady Prokhorychev said, the Govorit Moskva news portal reported Monday.

“That hole can fit half a finger, so it's a girl hedgehog, I guess,” Prokhorychev was quoted as saying. “I immediately wondered if that was a bellybutton. But it's not shaped as a bellybutton, and secondly, it's a hole.”

Prokhorychev said he called a Globus executive, who at first had “also laughed, of course,”

but later called back to say the toys have been recalled, Govorit Moskva reported.

“I'm already thinking, I should have bought one as a souvenir,” Prokhorychev added, Govorit Moskva reported.

But Vladimir's TV-Mig news portal quoted the children's rights ombudsman as saying he would never buy the toy.

“I am, of course, against [the toy]. All [toy] animals should be depersonalized. Even ordinary dolls should be depersonalized,” Prokhorychev was quoted as saying by TV-Mig.

Sales of toys such as the hedgehogs from Vladimir stores are “done intentionally to corrupt the nation starting from early childhood,” he was quoted by TV-Mig as saying. “There is a subtext of early sex education. If we don't respond, there will soon be boy hedgehogs.”

But many commenters on the TV-Mig website dismissed the complaints as adult concerns.

“I don't think children rack their brains [over toys' anatomy],” a reader commented. “They don't imagine primary sex characteristics in every pink-colored slit.”

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