

Sports Official at the Center of Russia's Doping Scandal Is Promoted to Deputy Prime Minister

October 19, 2016



Vitaly Mutko **Kremlin Press Service**

In a move by the Kremlin that displays enormous confidence in a man who's entertained the world for years with his broken English, Russian Sports Minister [Vitaly Mutko](#) was promoted to the post of deputy prime minister on Wednesday.

The decision comes after a turbulent year for Russian sports.

Mutko's new role will oversee sports, tourism, and youth policy. Deputy Minister Pavel Kolobkov is slated to fill Mutko's position in the Sports Ministry.

A report from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) [earlier this year](#) accused Mutko's ministry of carrying out a widespread state-backed doping program among the country's athletes.

The report led to Russia's track-and-field athletes being banned from this summer's Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, as well as the country's entire Paralympic squad losing the chance to compete.

Although the minister was not directly named in the report, independent Canadian expert Richard McLaren told reporters that claims Mutko was unaware of the program are “inconceivable.”

The minister also came under fire in 2010, when he was found to have spent \$32,000 of taxpayers' money during his stay in Canada at the Vancouver Winter Olympics.

Mutko's promotion is part of a regrouping effort after Russia was hit by major doping scandals last year, a source close to the government told The Moscow Times. As deputy prime minister, Mutko will no longer be directly involved in international sporting issues, leaving his replacement to deal with the continued fallout of Russia's doping scandal.

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