

# 19 Countries Call for Ban on Russia From International Sports

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In this Feb. 7, 2014 file photo, Alexander Zubkov of Russia carries the national flag as he leads the team during the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. **Mark Humphrey / AP**

The National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADO) of 19 countries have called for a ban on Russia from all international sporting competitions, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) reported in an online statement Wednesday.

The request was signed by Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States during a Jan. 10 summit in Dublin.

NADO leaders also called for a “removal of all major international competitions, as well a moratorium on the awarding of new competitions to Russia,” the statement read.

The move comes on the heels of the latest World Anti-Doping Agency report published in Dec. 2016 and presented by Richard McLaren, a lawyer who investigated doping in Russia.

The report alleges that more than a thousand Russian athletes spanning 30 different sports were connected to the use of performance-enhancing drugs or the concealment of positive urine samples.

McLaren's report covered the 2011–2015 period, during which, the investigator claimed, Russia carried out a massive operation to cover-up performance enhancing drug use. Russia's sporting officials deny the report's findings, claiming the allegations are politically motivated.

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Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko, formerly Russia's sports minister, reacted to NADO's statement saying that anti-doping organizations should not engage in politics.

“Anti-doping organizations are anti-doping organizations,” Mutko told the R-Sport news agency. “They should monitor the situation in their own countries, collect urine and not interfere with politics.”

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