

Russian Food Retailer VkusVill Apologizes for ‘Hurtful’ LGBT Family Ad

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As part of a regular series spotlighting families who shop at the chain, VkusVill had featured a “matriarch,” her female partner and two daughters. [Vkusvill.ru](https://vkusvill.ru)

Russian organic grocer VkusVill has [pulled](#) its promotional material featuring an LGBT family and replaced it with an apology less than a week after posting it.

Social media users reportedly [swarmed](#) VkusVill’s and the same-sex family’s accounts with death threats after their story ran Wednesday as part of a series spotlighting the retail chain’s regular customers. By Sunday, the advertising article’s URL contained a contrite message signed by VkusVill’s founder Andrei Krivenko and senior executives.

Related article: [Russian Food Retailer Defies ‘Gay Propaganda’ Law With LGBT Family-Featuring Ad](#)

“We consider this publication to be our mistake, which was the result of individual employees’ unprofessionalism,” VkusVill wrote in the apology.

VkusVill said the original advertising article that sparked an outburst of threats and outrage from conservative groups “hurt the feelings of a large number of our customers, employees, partners and suppliers.”

The retail chain’s decision to take down the original ad was met by outrage among social media users who championed its defiance of Russia’s law against “gay propaganda” that effectively makes public displays of LGBT-related content illegal.

“Members of the LGBT+ community have been under pressure from a homophobic society all their lives, and VkusVill couldn't stand it for even a couple of days,” one Russian user [tweeted](#).

“Can I, as a regular customer and as an LGBT person, perceive my further appearance within the walls of the store as a mistake of the employees who let me in? I do not know,” the [russiaforgays](#) Instagram account [wrote](#).

As part of a regular series spotlighting families who shop at the chain, VkusVill had featured a “matriarch,” her female partner and two daughters who practice ethical veganism, support fair trade and provide shelter to LGBT people struggling to find acceptance in their own families.

At the time, the retail chain said it would be “hypocritical” to omit the family’s story and marked the piece with an “18+” label to comply with Russia’s law against “gay propaganda toward minors.”

In its apology, VkusVill wrote: “The goal of our company is to enable our customers to receive fresh and delicious products every day, and not to publish articles that reflect any political or social views.”

Law enforcement authorities have not yet commented on VkusVill’s initial publication. Previously, prosecutors sought to press misdemeanor charges against Dolce & Gabbana, which showed kissing [same-sex couples](#) in an Instagram ad.

Western countries and human rights activists have criticized Russia’s 2013 “gay propaganda” law, as well as 2020 constitutional changes that contain a clause defining marriage as between a man and a woman only.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/07/05/russian-food-retailer-vkusvill-apologizes-for-hurtful-lgbt-family-ad-a74422>