

Russian Region Appoints Male Official to Head Women's Rights Council

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Andrei Puchkov, Deputy Governor of the Rostov region. donland.ru

Authorities in Russia's southern Rostov region have [appointed](#) a male official to lead the region's newly formed council on women's rights.

The government body will be tasked with creating policies on topics ranging from women's health to strengthening women's role in society to combating poverty and social disadvantage among women.

But women will hold just eight seats on the 14-seat council, which will be headed by Deputy Governor Andrei Puchkov.

The appointment of a male politician to lead the council sparked widespread criticism on local social media networks, but authorities defended their choice.

"I don't see anything strange with this [decision]," an employee of the regional government's press service [told](#) the Podyom news outlet.

“If we are looking at it from the gendered perspective, then there are a lot of women on the council. As a man, [Puchkov] will take better care of them,” they added.

In line with a countrywide [trend](#), the regional government also voiced plans to implement a number of measures aimed at reducing abortion rates in the region, the women’s news outlet Kosa Media [reported](#).

Among these measures is training doctors to speak with female patients in a manner that would allow them to “form a positive outlook on childbirth.”

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