

# Moscow Should Not Boycott Paris Olympics, Russian Sports Minister Says

By [AFP](#)

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**Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Sports Minister on Wednesday said Moscow should not boycott the upcoming Paris Olympics despite restrictions on its athletes over the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Last year, the International Olympic Committee suspended Russia from the Games, but later said it would allow Russian athletes to compete as neutrals outside of team events as long as they do not actively support the war on Ukraine.

Moscow slammed the decision but until now had not indicated whether it would recommend its athletes go to Paris despite the restrictions.

"We should not turn away, close ourselves off or boycott this event," Sports Minister Oleg Matytsin said.

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"We should keep open the possibility of dialogue and take part in competitions," he added.

Matytsin said Moscow could not give "general recommendations" to all of its athletes because "each international federation has different approaches."

"Some completely ban taking part, some leave the right to take part in a neutral status," he said while noting the importance of giving Russian athletes the chance "to prove we are a great nation in sports."

Russian President Vladimir Putin has slammed the restrictions as "discrimination" but stopped short of telling the country's athletes whether they should go to Paris.

"To go or not to go?... The conditions must be closely analyzed," Putin said in December.

Moscow's offensive in Ukraine has thrown it into isolation from the West, including in sports.

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