

# Arshavin Apologizes for Russia's Quick Exit From Euro 2012

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Andrei Arshavin

Russia captain Andrei Arshavin has apologized for his team's disappointing showing at Euro 2012 after coming under heavy criticism at home.

"As team captain, on behalf of our players and myself personally, I would like to apologize for our performance and the result that we had," Arshavin told a local television station in St. Petersburg late last week, days after Russia's June 16 exit following a 1-0 upset by underdog Greece in its final Group A match.

"It's not right to shy away [from criticism]. That's why I took this moment to say something on this subject. I will do it only once and will not talk about this any further," he added.

Arshavin was involved in a much-publicized spat with Russian fans in the team's hotel in central Warsaw just a few hours after the last match.

After one of the fans, State Duma Deputy Anton Belyakov of A Just Russia, demanded

an explanation for the team's poor showing, Arshavin said: "If you have had high expectations for our team here, then it's your problem, not ours."

Arshavin's words sparked a storm of negative publicity. "How can a citizen of Russia treat the honor of his country like that?" Gazprom deputy chairman Valery Golubev told local media. "He should be deported."

Gazprom is the owner of champions Zenit St. Petersburg, where Arshavin made his name as a player before joining Britain's Arsenal in 2009.

Meanwhile, the Russian Football Association has been fined 35,000 euros (\$43,900) after fans set off and threw fireworks and displayed illicit banners during their team's final group match against Greece, UEFA said Saturday. This brings the total amount that Russians have been fined for fans' behavior during Euro 2012 to 185,000 euros.

In Moscow, the Foreign Ministry urged Poland on Friday to release fans detained 10 days earlier in street battles with Poles. But Poland's Foreign Ministry said the matter would be dealt with in line with the law.

*(Reuters, MT)*

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