

Retailer Debenhams Returns

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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British department store group Debenhams expects to generate a fifth of its overseas sales by 2015 in Russia, which is set to become Europe's biggest retail market.

Debenhams, which has been increasing sales at home despite a recession there, returned to Russia in September, six years after pulling out of the country because it was losing money.

Russia is Europe's second-biggest retail market, with sales of \$621 billion last year, according to data consultancy Euromonitor, and it is on track to become the biggest by 2013 or 2014.

"Russia should be a massive success story for anyone who comes here," Francis McAuley, the company's international director, said last week.

"Yes, it's volatile, but everyone's volatile in the world right now. I have high hopes for Russia."

International retailers have long been trying to establish themselves in Russia, though many have struggled. France's Carrefour pulled out after only four months in 2009.

Debenhams, Britain's No. 2 department store group by sales, behind John Lewis, has about 170 domestic stores and franchises in 27 countries.

McAuley said Russia could generate 20 percent of Debenhams' international turnover.

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