

Astakhov Brings 2 Girls Home From Spain

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Children's ombudsman Pavel Astakhov has flown to Spain and brought back to Russia two young children who had been placed in state care there after being removed from their parents for suspected neglect.

"The children who were removed from Russian families in Spain have returned to Moscow," Astakhov said on [Twitter](#).

Six-year-old Karina has been placed in the temporary custody of an uncle living in Moscow, while 18-month-old Angel has been turned over to child protective services in the Central Russian city of Lipetsk, he said.

Karina and Angel were placed in Spanish orphanages last year, and Spanish authorities, at Astakhov's request, agreed to return them to relatives in Russia.

"The Spanish side has acknowledged that the children would be better off with their relatives' families in Russia than at an orphanage or in an adoptive family in Spain," Astakhov said.

The child welfare service in Catalonia said this was the first instance where adopted Russian children had been repatriated from Spain to their homeland.

The parents will be able to meet their children in Russia because the deprivation of their parental rights was valid only in Spain, Astakhov told journalists after arriving in Moscow.

Further details about the parents and the circumstances surrounding the custody cases were not immediately available.

Astakhov's visit to Spain is the latest trip in which he has made loud public remarks about the need to protect the rights of Russian children abroad. Last year he visited a ranch for troubled youth in the U.S. state of Montana and demanded that its owners hand over several Russian-born children living there. The owners refused, and Astakhov left empty-handed.

Astakhov has been a vocal supporter of a government ban on U.S. parents adopting Russian children. The ban came into force at the start of this year after the U.S. blacklisted Russian officials implicated of human rights violations. Astakhov says the ban is needed to protect Russian children from possible abuse in the U.S.

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