

Gay U.S. TV Personality to Skip Miss Universe Pageant Over Safety Fears

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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WASHINGTON — A gay U.S. talk show host and executive producer of the hit reality television shows "Real Housewives" and "Top Chef" has turned down the post of co-host for the upcoming Miss Universe beauty pageant in Moscow, over fears he will be unsafe, an entertainment website reported.

Andy Cohen, who is an executive and presenter at the U.S. television channel Bravo, told E! News that he would not present the competition in Moscow on Nov. 9 because "their discriminatory policies make it unsafe for the gays who live there and gays coming to work or visit."

"The law is that anyone under suspicion of homosexuality can be arrested," Cohen said, according to the E! Channel website, adding that he "didn't feel right as a gay man stepping foot into Russia."

Russian officials say the new law is intended solely to protect minors from "propaganda" about homosexuality and in no way impinges on the freedom of adults to make their own sexual choices.

Critics of the law, however, say it amounts to a state-supported crackdown on gay people.

Miss Universe is a joint venture of U.S. tycoon Donald Trump and the media company NBCUniversal, according to the pageant website. Each year as many as 85 countries send a pageant contestant to compete for the title.

An online petition to move the pageant from Russia had gathered more than 24,700 signatures at the time of writing.

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