

Rainbow Flags Get Green Light at Russia's World Cup

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Spectators at the World Cup next year will be allowed to fly rainbow flags during matches, a top Russian football official said Thursday.

Despite a law in Russia prohibiting gay propaganda, World Cup ambassador Alexei Smertin said at a Moscow news conference on discrimination that rainbow flags would be tolerated.

“There will definitely be no ban on wearing rainbow symbols in Russia,” Smertin was [cited](#) as saying by the Associated Press. “It’s clear you can come here and not be fined for expressing feelings.”

“The law is about propaganda to minors...I can’t imagine that anyone is going to go into a school and speak,” Smertin said, adding it was unlikely that gay fans would be found in infringement of the law.

Russia passed the legislation in 2013, which led to the banning of gay pride events and

discussions of gay rights where children might be present.

Russian officials took a similar stance on the issue ahead of Sochi hosting the 2014 Olympic Games. President Putin had then said that gay people would be welcome in the city but must “leave the children in peace.”

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