

Mistral Talks on Hold

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The  **Moscow Times**

Russia has frozen talks about purchasing Mistral-class helicopter carriers from France after announcing an international tender for the ships Oct. 4, Rosoboronexport said Tuesday, RIA-Novosti reported.

Negotiations, which had been under way for several months, may be resumed after the tender ends Nov. 4, said Ivan Goncharenko, a representative of the state arms export monopoly.

He did not say whether any other shipbuilders have placed bids, but defense analyst Mikhail Barabanov told Interfax on Tuesday that Italy's Fincantieri might join the race.

(MT)

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