

Mistral Hull Heading From Russia This Summer

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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In June 2011 Russia and France signed a \$1.7 billion agreement for the joint building of two Mistral ships.

A St. Petersburg shipyard will send France the assembled stern section for the first Mistral helicopter carrying amphibious assault ship this summer, Alexei Kravchenko, spokesman for the United Shipbuilding Corporation, announced Friday.

The stern section is under construction at the Baltiisky Zavod shipyard in St. Petersburg owned by United Shipbuilding Corporation. It will consist of 120 separate sections to be assembled at the shipyard, Kravchenko said.

The assembled section will then be shipped to France by sea, Interfax said.

"The shipment of the first Mistral's stern section to France means the Russian shipbuilders will have fulfilled their obligations to build [parts of] the ship's hull," Kravchenko said. He

denied recent rumors in the press that construction of the stern and fulfillment by Russia of its commitments is behind schedule. "Such information does not correspond to reality," Kravchenko said.

The official keel laying ceremony for the first Mistral for the Russian Navy will be held in the French city of St. Nazaire on Friday, Interfax reported.

France announced in Feb. 2010 an agreement to sell Russia a Mistral ship, with an option for three more vessels. On June 17, 2011 Russia and France signed \$1.7 billion contract for the joint building of the first two Mistral ships.

The spokesman for the United Shipbuilding Corporation declined to comment on the fate of the planned second Mistral ship.

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