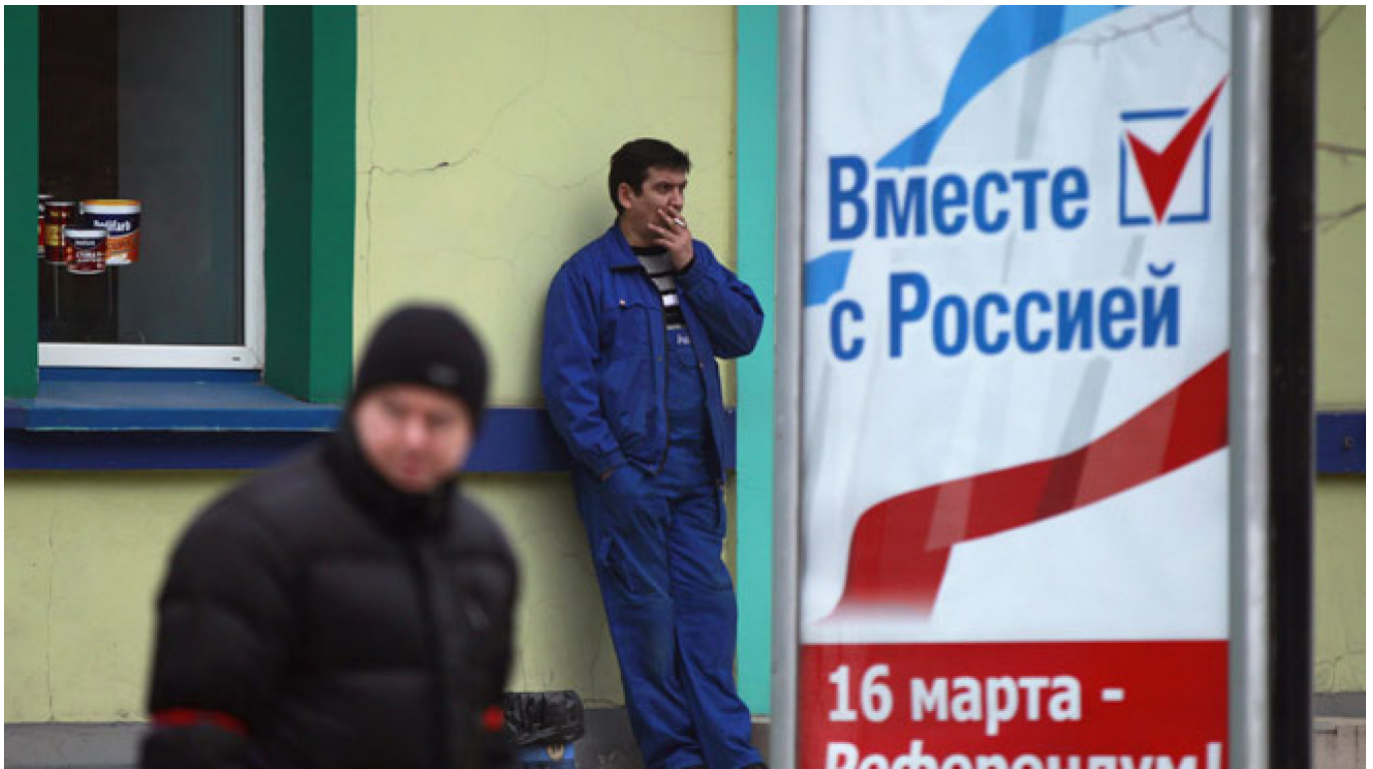


Crimean Minister Expects \$5Bln in Investment from Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A poster on display in Simferopol on Tuesday promoting the Sunday referendum reads: "Together with Russia."

Crimea expects \$5 billion in investments from Russia in the coming years, a regional official said, Interfax reported Tuesday.

Crimean Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Temigaliev said he expects rapid economic growth in various sectors thanks to investments from Russia, which the Ukrainian region has asked to join.

Russian investors could be particularly attracted to offshore gas production with Chernomorneftegaz, the Ukrainian oil and gas company that Crimean authorities have said they are nationalizing, Temigaliev said. The deputy prime minister said that negotiations were being conducted about creating a gas-vapor power plant in the region and added that traffic at Crimean ports would increase dramatically, saying, "If now we are talking about

tens of thousands of tons, in the future it may be tens of millions of tons."

Last week the region's parliament asked Russia to annex Crimea. The region has seen increasing separatist tension among ethnic Russians since a pro-Western government took control in Kiev after Kremlin ally and former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich fled the capital amid violent protests. Armed men thought to be Russian soldiers have taken control of the peninsula, though Moscow has denied any relationship to the unidentified military forces.

Despite tension between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian residents in the region, the Crimean government has high hopes for the economic benefits of becoming part of Russia, if a referendum on leaving Ukraine and joining Russia is passed on Sunday as expected. Temigaliev said that growth as part of Russia could be "colossal" if a special economic zone with tax incentives is established.

In the shorter term, Temigaliev said that Crimea will receive \$1 billion from Moscow for salaries and pensions in the coming months.

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