

# Putin: Russia Won't Impose Penalties on France Over Mistral Decision

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Mistral-class helicopter carrier Vladivostok is seen at the STX Les Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard site in Saint-Nazaire, Sept. 4, 2014.

Russia will not impose penalties against France over its failure to fulfill a \$1.2 billion euro (\$1.3 billion) contract to supply two Mistral helicopter carriers, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday.

"We do intend to seek any penalties or fines ... but it is necessary that all costs we have incurred are covered," Putin said during his annual televised call-in show.

"I assume the current French leadership and the French generally are good people and will return our money," he said.

France last year suspended indefinitely the delivery of the first of the two warships ordered by Russia because of Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis.

Putin said France's decision not to fulfill a contract to supply Russia with two Mistral helicopter carriers would not undermine Russia's defense capabilities.

"[France's] refusal to supply the ships under the current contract is of course a bad sign. But for us, in terms of maintaining our defense capabilities ... it does not matter," Putin said.

The Mistral ships are more advanced than anything currently fielded by Russia's navy, which lost much of its might during years of underinvestment following the fall of the Soviet Union.

The deal with France had involved a technology transfer from France to Russia and gave Russia the option of building two more Mistrals in local shipyards. That part of the deal is also frozen.

Russia defense officials and companies have claimed that the country's shipyards could build an analogue to the Mistral.

"Of course we will build one, there's nothing super hard about it," the head of state-owned United Shipbuilding Corporation, Alexei Rakhmanov, was quoted by news agency RIA Novosti last month.

*Material from the Moscow Times was included in this report.*

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