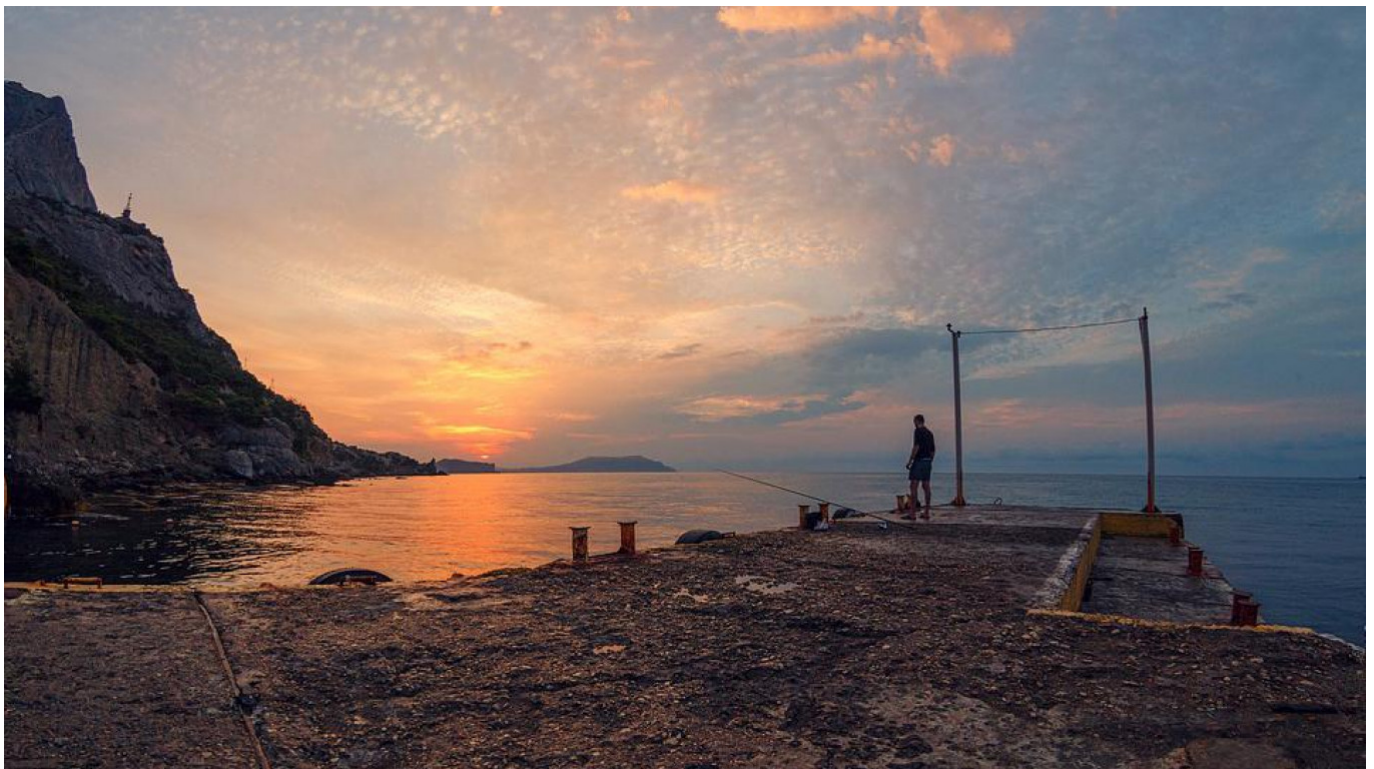


Crimean Authorities Meet Turkish Delegation, Seek Investment

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Crimean authorities met with a delegation of Turkish businessmen on Thursday to discuss prospects for investment in the peninsula, the TASS news agency reported Thursday.

"I want to thank and welcome you on behalf of the head of the republic [Sergei Aksyonov] and to pass along his greetings," said Crimean Economic Development Minister Valentin Demidov.

According to the minister, regional authorities are prepared to provide "full support" to Turkish entrepreneurs who want to do business in Crimea. In turn, Hasan Cengiz, head of the Turkish Association of Eurasian Governments, expressed hopes that his delegation would be the first of many.

While acknowledging that Western sanctions on business in the occupied Crimean peninsula are an impediment to Turkish investment, Cengiz expressed hope that they would be removed.

"I am confident that the sanctions will be lifted in the near future," he said.

The delegation of Turkish businessmen, public figures, and politicians arrived on Wednesday to study investment opportunities in the Crimean peninsula. In addition to Hasan Cengiz, the guest list included deputy mayor of Ankara Ahmet Tunc, Turkish presidential representative Ibrahim Erilli, and various representatives of Turkish businesses interested in the implementation of projects in Crimea.

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