
Moscow to seek damages if Mistral ship not delivered by end Nov - source

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"We are preparing for different scenarios. We are waiting until the end of the month [the fulfillment of Mistral deal], then we will make serious claims," the source said on condition of anonymity.

According to the source, experts are currently analyzing possible damage to Russia if the deal is not fulfilled, and the estimated sum will be made public.

"This amount [of compensation] will not be secret," the source added.

In the meantime, another Russian source in the sphere of military-technical cooperation told RIA Novosti that France hasn't yet withdrawn the invitations to the delivery ceremony for the vessel.

"The French are keeping silent. They invited us [to the ceremony], but haven't withdrawn their invitation yet. [We haven't received] any official address [from them]," he added.

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On Thursday, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Paris hasn't yet fixed a date for delivery of the first of two Mistral helicopter carriers to Russia (scheduled for November 14).

"The president of the Republic has said that a definitive decision will come at the right moment, taking into account all the responsibilities that come with this decision, which is not a simple one," he added.



In October, French and Russian officials received invitation letters for the ceremony of the Mistral ship's delivery. France's *Le Nouvel Observateur* magazine wrote on Wednesday that they were sent by DCNS, a French industrial group specializing in naval defense and energy. The group later said that the invitations were issued by mistake.

Russia and France signed a €1.12 billion (US\$1.6 billion) deal to build two Mistral helicopter carriers back in June 2011. The contract says that Russia was supposed to receive the first of the two warships, the Vladivostok, in October 2014.

However, the delivery of the vessel was postponed due to the conflict in Ukraine and pressure applied by the US and EU on France to cancel the contract.

Western allies have been pushing Paris for months, saying that France has to make sacrifices to meet its commitment to oppose Moscow through sanctions over the crisis in Ukraine.

According to the sources, the non-delivery of the two Mistral helicopter carriers to Russia could reach \$ 3 billion.

The second Mistral-class helicopter carrier, the Sevastopol, is expected to be handed over to Russia next year.