

AvtoVAZ Could Make New Models

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Renault may join Japanese affiliate Nissan Motor in developing models targeted at Russia once the companies complete a deal to buy a majority stake in AvtoVAZ.

Renault may seek to make use of AvtoVAZ's facilities to develop vehicles for the Russian market, Philippe Klein, head of the French carmaker's product planning, said last week at the Geneva Motor Show. Nissan chief performance officer Colin Dodge said at the show that the Yokohama-based carmaker would add three models built in Russia.

"We have a global strategy as well as this kind of pragmatic approach that we are undertaking when it makes sense," Klein said.

Russia's car and light-truck market expanded 39 percent in 2011 to 2.65 million vehicles, and AvtoVAZ, the country's biggest automaker, said March 5 that its sales in February jumped 33 percent. Christian Klingler, sales chief at Volkswagen, said in Geneva last week that Russia, along with China and the United States, would help keep global auto-industry growth at a "low single-digit" rate this year as Europe's market shrinks.

The French manufacturer, based in the Paris suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt, already owns 25 percent of AvtoVAZ. The Renault-Nissan alliance expects to conclude an agreement with AvtoVAZ's top two Russian shareholders to buy a controlling stake in the automaker in coming weeks, Carlos Ghosn, head of Renault and its Japanese partner, said at the Geneva Motor Show.

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