

Tuva to Subsidize Purchases of Ford Minibuses

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Economic Ministry of the Tuva republic will provide subsidies to shuttle bus operators to help them replace Gazelle minibuses with Ford ones, the republic's website announced, Interfax reported Wednesday.

The ministry will provide up to half the cost of lease agreements for Fords.

"The whole shuttle bus fleet, which is almost entirely owned by private carriers, will be upgraded with the help of subsidies under the program aimed at supporting small businesses," the website stated.

The ministry did not disclose the volume of the subsidies.

GAZ Group, which produces Gazelles, said Wednesday that it plans to challenge the subsidies in court.

"The Tuva government's announcement is unprecedented in terms of its open violation of several legal requirements for regional authorities," GAZ Vice President Yelena Matveyeva was quoted as saying in a press release. "We believe that the plans announced by the Tuva government are contrary to antitrust law and to the principles of an open and transparent public procurement system whose aim is to eliminate corruption."

She said that GAZ would go to court to seek the republic's compliance with the law and that the company would sue to protect its reputation.

GAZ said the Tuva government had misled taxi operators about the quality of Gazelles, understated their mileage and overstated their fuel consumption.

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