

Meteorite Export Ban Proposed in Duma

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The State Duma has proposed adding Chelyabinsk meteorite fragments to the federal list of items banned from being exported abroad, a news report said Thursday.

Duma deputies believe that the export of meteorite fragments could prevent Russian scientists from performing a proper scientific analysis of the space rock, thereby impeding Russian science overall.

Alexei Chepa, deputy head of the Duma's Science and Technology Committee, told Izvestia that although "meteorites don't fall that often, it is nevertheless imperative to stipulate in the [relevant] law that their export abroad is prohibited." He added that the committee would review options for amending current legislation next week.

Current legislation bans export of a list of items of "cultural value" but does not include any mention of space rock fragments.

Viktor Grokhovsky, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences' commission for meteorites

and the International Meteorite Society, told the daily that some fragments had already ended up abroad.

"If Western scientists publish the results of the Chelyabinsk meteorite's analysis first, it will affect the prestige of Russian science," he said.

At the moment, fragments of Chelyabinsk meteorite are available for purchase on various websites for 1,000–16,000 rubles (\$33–\$522).

The meteorite that crashed on Feb. 15 in the Chelyabinsk region weighed about 10,000 tons, with a 17-meter diameter. It disintegrated after entering the Earth's atmosphere and exploded above the Chelyabinsk region, causing panic and injuring over 1,500 people.

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