

Railways Canceling Regional Commuter Trains Due to Lack of Subsidies

By [The Moscow Times](#)

February 10, 2014



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The Central Suburban Passenger Company, or CSPC, canceled almost 150 commuter train routes in January due to a lack of state subsidies, and more look set to be dropped over the coming months, Kommersant reported Monday.

Commuter services had been cross-subsidized at the expense of freight, but that arrangement was canceled in 2011.

By the end of 2013 only five regions had made a profit for CSPC, which is the biggest commuter train company in the country, and just twelve regions managed to pay off their debts in full.

Vladimir Yakunin — head of Russian Railways, which owns 50 percent of CSPC — said that the regions owe CSPC a total debt of 30 billion rubles (\$860 million), accrued since 2011.

Russian Railways has been unable to reach an agreement with the regions to cover the debts they incur in 2014 and has decided to reduce commuter services to offset losses.

Last month 144 routes were discontinued in 26 regions, said Maxim Schneider, an official at Russian Railways responsible for commuter trains. The biggest numbers of cancellations were in the Lipetsk and Kaliningrad regions.

Another 139 commuter trains will be cut in February and March, as well as a further 20 in May, Schneider said.

Only 310 routes were canceled during the last two years.

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