

Constitutional Court Approves Russia-Crimea Treaty

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Russia's Constitutional Court has approved the treaty between President Vladimir Putin and the Crimean authorities, moving the breakaway region yet closer to its accession into Russia.

The body had decided in a meeting that the treaty was constitutional, court head Valery Zorkin told Interfax.

Zorkin said that usually the court holds public hearings on treaties as some parts of the agreements can be contested. However, he said that no public hearings were conducted because no contesting party was present.

After a referendum on Sunday in which 96 percent of Crimean voters cast their ballots to join Russia and leave Ukraine, Russia is expected to annex Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as two new subjects within the coming days.

According to Russia's procedure for adopting new subjects, the agreement and changes to the

65th article of the Russian Constitution must be ratified by the State Duma and the Federation Council.

A Duma meeting on the matter is scheduled for 4 p.m. Thursday, while the Federation Council one is scheduled for noon on Friday.

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