

# State Duma Approves Crimea Annexation Treaty

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**The  Moscow Times**

The State Duma on Thursday voted to ratify the annexation treaty signed between President Vladimir Putin and the independent-Crimean authorities on Tuesday, as Crimea's formal integration into Russia moves closer.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov appeared before the Duma to present the treaty and urged its ratification for the sake of protecting ethnic Russians in Crimea.

The assembly voted in favor of ratification 433 to 1.

The upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, will vote to ratify the treaty on Friday.

Once the Federation Council gives its approval, the integration period will begin. This process will be conducted throughout the rest of 2014, culminating in Crimea's full accession on Jan. 1, 2015.

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