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Russia's Sberbank Hopes Free Cats Will Boost Mortgage Sales

By The Moscow Times

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Sberbank is offering a choice of 10 cats to mortgage-buyers, who will get the pet brought to their door by a new delivery service.

Russia's biggest lender, Sberbank, is looking to boost mortgage sales by offering a free cat to anyone willing to buy a property with money loaned from the bank.

The bank is offering a choice of 10 cats to mortgage-buyers, who will get the pet brought to their door by a new delivery service. According to a special website, KotoService.ru, the felines on offer include a ginger cat called "Apricot" and a hairless cat known as "Kuzya."

The gimmick appears to be an attempt to maximize profits from Russia's mortgage lending boom as people watch their savings lose value amid a sliding ruble and rising interest rates.

A short video on the website shows cats wandering around empty apartments accompanied by smiling homeowners.

Unfortunately, the cats must be returned to Sberbank after they have had the run of the new property. A popular Russian superstition maintains that it is good luck if cats are first to enter a new home.

The Central Bank said last month that the amount of mortgage lending in Russia was 35.6 percent higher than at the same point last year.

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