

Donetsk Separatists to Send Crimea Coal for Winter Heating

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Separatists in eastern Ukraine will ship 50,000 tons of coal by the end of the week to Russia's recently annexed Crimean Peninsula for winter heating, a press release from the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic stated Thursday.

Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in March, is seeking to achieve "complete energy independence" from Kiev, Sergei Aksyonov, Crimea's prime minister, said last month in comments carried by TASS.

Eastern Ukraine's Donbass region, which is partly controlled by the Donetsk rebels, has a long history of coal mining. But the separatist conflict has shuttered many coal mines in Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk, areas that once accounted for a quarter of Ukraine's industrial output, Reuters reported earlier this month.

The Donetsk People's Republic plans to ship the coal from the Chelyuskintsev mine. Although

the mine is currently in a state of disuse, restarting it "can be done in two days if we use all necessary resources," Ivan Anisimov, first deputy of the self-proclaimed republic's Fuel and Energy Ministry, was quoted as saying in the press release. Anisimov did not state how much Crimea would pay for its coal.

The coal will likely be delivered by train to Novorossisk, a southern Russian port city, and then by sea to Crimea, Airat Khalikov, an analyst for Veles Capital, told news site Gazeta.ru.

Due to fighting between government forces and the separatists, it would be "unrealistic" to expect the coal to be delivered south through Ukraine, which would be more convenient, he said.

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