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# Russia Says Mistral Warship Delivery Set for Nov. 14

By The Moscow Times

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Laborers work on the Mistral-class helicopter carrier Vladivostok at the STX Les Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard site in Saint-Nazaire.

Russia has received an invitation to take delivery of the first of two Mistral helicopter carriers from France on Nov. 14, news agency RIA Novosti quoted Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin as saying Wednesday.

RIA Novosti also quoted Rogozin as saying the second vessel would be put afloat in dock on the same day, although French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Tuesday that Paris would wait until next month to decide whether to deliver the first of the two vessels.

"Everything is going as planned in terms of the technical fulfillment of the contract, and we stick to that," Rogozin was quoted as saying." As for political decisions, we assume that France should protect its reputation as a reliable partner, including in the military and technical area."

Under pressure from Western partners to scrap the deliveries because of the crisis over Ukraine, French President Francois Hollande said last month that he was pushing back the original end-October delivery date and that he would hand over only the first carrier.

Moscow has said it will seek damages if the deliveries are canceled or suspended.

Russia's Mistral purchases would give it access to advanced technology, alarming some of France's NATO allies, which consider that Paris could be strengthening Moscow militarily.

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