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Russian Lawmaker Wants French Wine Ban After Paris Suspends Mistral Delivery

By The Moscow Times

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Russian lawmaker has proposed banning the import of French wines.

A lawmaker on the State Duma's Defense Committee has proposed banning the import of French wines in response to Paris' decision to suspend delivery of the first of two helicopter carriers to Russia.

"Let's ban the sale of French wine in Russia," Deputy Vladimir Bessonov told Russian News Service radio on Tuesday. "Even talking about this can bring about desired results," he said, without specifying what these would be.

France, under pressure from its Western allies to cancel a 1.2 billion euro contract ($1.58 billion) with Russia for Mistral-class warships, said earlier Tuesday that it was suspending delivery of the first of two carriers because of Russia's meddling in eastern Ukraine.

In the case of a breach of contract, France would be obliged to return this money, which Deputy Defense Minister Yury Borisov said Russia could reinvest elsewhere, Kommersant reported Wednesday.

"The helicopter carrier is not a necessary element for the development of our Navy, but as for the money that will return to us as a refund of an advance payment we made, we will find where to spend it more effectively," Borisov was quoted as saying.

Along with his calls for punishing French winemakers, Bessonov also told Russian News Service that his country should stop buying anything from NATO countries and that Russia should switch to using domestically manufactured weapons.

"Even food should not be purchased from NATO countries, to say nothing about weapons, because security should be ensured," he was quoted as saying. "This [buying weapons] is the greatest folly, if not sabotage."

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