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Russia's Space Agency to Be Reformed as Corporation by End of Year

By The Moscow Times

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Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin

Russia's federal space agency will be replaced by a state corporation by the second half of 2015 as part of the government's latest bid to drastically reform its ailing space industry, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said on a Sunday evening talk show, news agency TASS reported Monday.

The State Duma last week approved the abolishment of federal space agency Roscosmos, which will be replaced by a new state corporation, also to be called Roscosmos.

While the old Roscosmos was responsible primarily for mission planning, with other state entities building and designing space equipment, the new Roscosmos will unite all elements of the space process under one house.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced the plan earlier this year after studying reform

proposals over 2014 with Rogozin, who said the new organization will introduce "a completely different [level of] accountability for performance," TASS reported Monday.

Russia's space program has been plagued by corruption scandals and reports of financial mismanagement over the past several years, which Rogozin has credited as the root cause for a string of dramatic spacecraft disasters since 2010.

But the space industry's bigger problems lie with low employee wages and a decline in the quality of rocket manufacturing.

In its new, corporate identity, Roscosmos will be responsible not only for setting mission goals but managing wages for space industry workers and modernizing production facilities.

"It will take maybe another two to three years to intensively technically re-equip the rocket and space industry," Rogozin said on federal television channel Rossia-1 on Sunday.

Rogozin warned last week that Russia risks losing its 40 percent share of the global commercial satellite launch market to new firms emerging from the United States, such as the California-based SpaceX, if the industry's problems are not fixed by the government's reform efforts.

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