

Putin Liquidates Ministry of Crimean Affairs

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President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree liquidating the Ministry of Crimean Affairs, the agency tasked with overseeing the absorption of the Black Sea peninsula into Russia, the Kremlin said Wednesday.

The ministry was established last March immediately after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine. Reports that it could be disbanded appeared in the Russian press earlier this month. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev made the formal proposal to Putin on Wednesday, the TASS news agency reported.

"I think it's possible to assume the Ministry of Crimea has fulfilled its task," Medvedev was quoted as saying in the report, noting that its liquidation would also help the government save on economic and managerial resources.

Medvedev said efforts should still be made to ensure the further economic and social integration of Crimea into Russia, and suggested handing over responsibility to the Economic Development Ministry.

“We know how far Crimea lags behind other regions of our country,” he was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti.

A decree authorizing the liquidation of the Ministry of Crimean Affairs was published later Wednesday on the Kremlin's website.

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