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France Denies Russian Reports of Deal on Mistral Warship Compensation

By The Moscow Times

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PARIS — French President Francois Hollande said Friday that no agreement had been reached yet on the cancellation of a Mistral helicopter carriers deal with Russia and that he would take a decision in the coming weeks.

Russian media had reported earlier on Friday that Paris and Moscow had reached a compensation deal for the cancellation of the delivery of two French-made Mistral helicopter carriers.

Vladimir Kozhin, an adviser to President Vladimir Putin on military matters, told news agency RIA Novosti that "The talks are already over, everything is already decided — both the timeframe and the sums."

On Friday, Russian newspaper Kommersant said France would pay Russia almost 1.2 billion euros for failing to deliver the two Mistrals.

But Hollande denied that a deal had been reached. "There is no agreement for the moment, but we are working to find solutions," he said on BFM TV.

"Talks are ongoing. I will take a decision in the coming weeks," he added.

Hollande went back on the order after coming under pressure from his Western allies not to deliver the Mistrals because of Russia's role in the Ukraine crisis.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said earlier on Friday "important decisions" would be taken soon.

Asked about the reports, Valls told a news conference: "We will be able to talk about it in a few days, in a few weeks, and important decisions will be made in that regard at the end of the summer."

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