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First Decline in Car Showrooms in Russia Since 2009

By The Moscow Times

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The number of car showrooms in Russia shrunk to 4,159 in 2015, a decline of 7 percent compared to 2014, the Vedomosti daily newspaper reported Wednesday, citing data from Auto Business Review magazine.

A decline has been registered for the first time since 2009, the magazine's editor-in-chief Sergei Baranov told Vedomosti.

According to the Russian Automotive Dealers association, a total of 700 showrooms and 200-250 car dealerships were forced to close in 2015, the newspaper reported.

Russian carmaker AvtoVAZ closed the largest number of sales outlets — 66 — while opening only 34 new ones.

Meanwhile, Hyundai, Kia, Renault and Volkswagen have managed to increase the number of their dealerships.

A result of Russians' declining purchasing power, car sales numbered 1.6 million in 2015, a decline of 35.7 percent compared to 2014, according to data from the Association of European Businesses (AEB), a Moscow lobby group.

In 2016, AEB predicts that the Russian car market will shrink 4.7 percent.

According to Sergei Udalov, executive director of car market research agency Autostat,

the number of car showrooms will also continue to shrink next year, Vedomosti reported.

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