

Russia's Pskov Authorities Rebuff 'Poorest Region' Title

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A view of Pskov, Russia.

Authorities in Russia's western Pskov region have criticized the RIA Novosti news agency for naming their region the poorest in Russia, the FlashNord news agency reported Thursday, citing a local official.

"This bizarre rating has nothing to do with reality," the unidentified source said, claiming that the rating was "obviously" forged in order to smear the region's Governor Andrei Turchak.

Turchak himself expressed his discontent on Wednesday by calling the rating "nonsense."

"We are a solid middle in terms of gross regional product," the governor was quoted as saying. The Pskov region was ranked fifth in the country in terms of the ratio of vehicles per person, Turchak added.

The rating, published on Wednesday, revealed that average families with more than two children in the Pskov region are alarmingly close to the poverty line as they reportedly had only 570 rubles (\$8.50) left every month after buying only basic necessities.

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