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Russian Science in Crisis, Says New Academy of Sciences Chief

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Alexander Sergeyev, director of the Institute of Applied Physics of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS)

Russian science is in crisis, according to the new head of the country's Academy of Sciences.

The physicist Alexander Sergeyev was approved by President Vladimir Putin as the academy's new president after his election late last month.

In an interview published Monday by the Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper, Sergeyev said that both the academy and Russian leadership should understand that "science today is in crisis."

"Sometimes voices are heard saying that everything isn't so bad, that our scientists are published more and more — this is wishful thinking," he said.

Sergeyev named a sharp drop in invitations for Russian papers at international academic conferences and fewer high-level publications on Russia-based research as two indicators of

the crisis.

One of the main reasons for the state’s inability to properly fund the sciences is that it invests heavily in business, said the new Academy of Sciences president.

“Thus our science fell into a sort of ‘valley of death,’" he said. Sergeyev recommended implementing three value levels: a level of understanding, a level of competitiveness, and a level of leadership.

Sergeyev's predecessor told Putin last year that Russian science risked falling behind Iran, after China, India and Brazil overtook Russia in the past two decades.

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