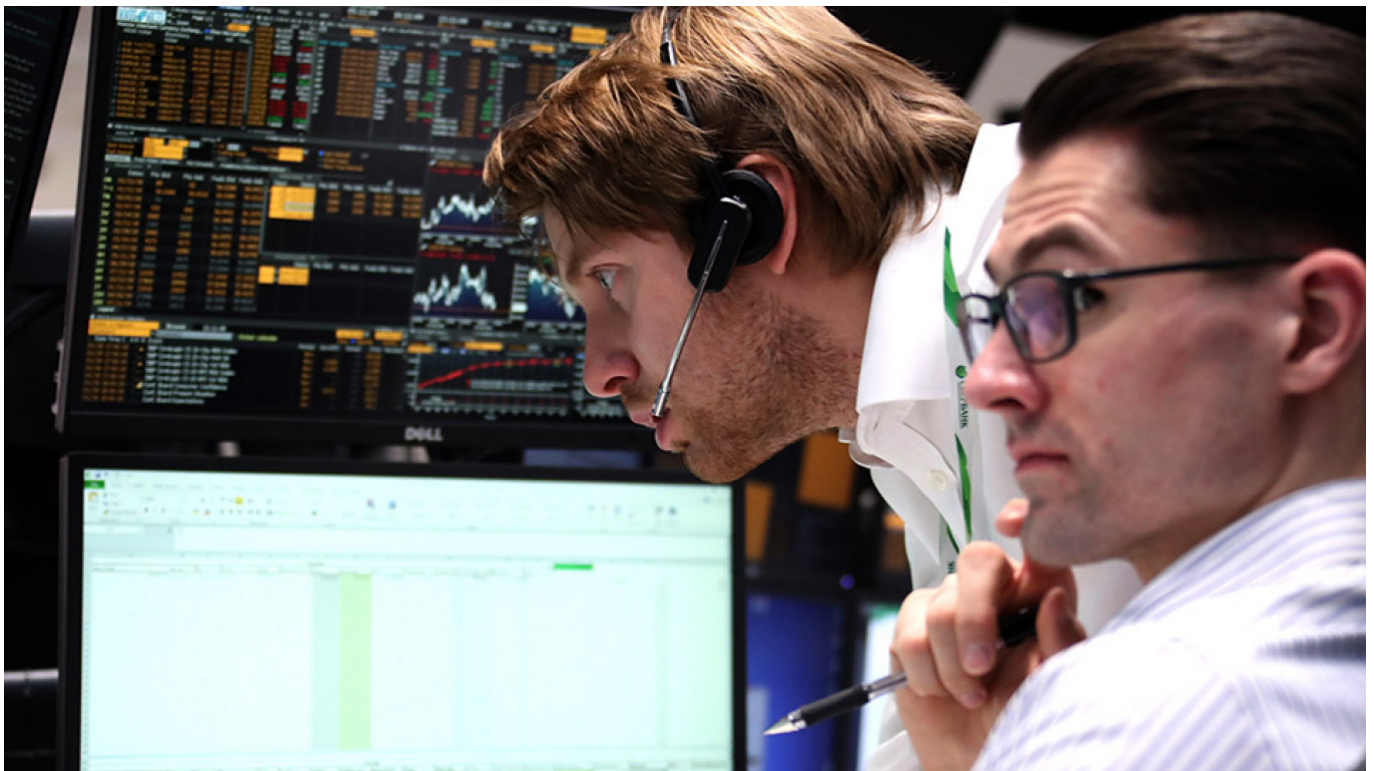


St. Petersburg Stock Market Considers Relocating to Russia's Far East

Exchange plans move to offshore zone and launch trading in Hong Kong shares.

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The Saint Petersburg Stock Exchange is also considering a name-change. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

The St. Petersburg stock market, Russia's third largest exchange, is considering relocating to the Far East to tap into the growing pool of investors in the region.

The stock exchange has started weighing up a decision to move to one of Russia's special offshore zones, Russky Island, near Vladivostok in Russia's Far East, as part of a wider rebranding that would include a possible name-change from "Saint Petersburg Exchange" to "Voshod".

A representative told The Moscow Times that the likely move is "related to the exchange's plans to launch trading in Hong Kong securities."

Any relocation would be a decisive shift eastwards for the company which has made a name by offering share trading in some of the world's largest U.S.-listed companies, such as Apple, Facebook, Alibaba, Microsoft, Amazon and Visa.

The move would also allow the exchange to secure more customers from Russia's far-flung regions, said a spokesperson for the Association of Financial Market Participants (NPRTS) — a shareholder of the Saint Petersburg Exchange.

“One of the main goals of all the members of NPRTS is to increase the availability of financial services throughout Russia. This is especially true for regions located in time zones other than Moscow, so transferring part of the functionality of the stock exchange to the Far East is justified. The trading session will begin at 04:30 GMT, thus providing a convenient trading time for investors from the eastern time zone of Russia.”

Rusky Island is one of two offshore zones in Russia's Far East which offer tax discounts to companies that invest and move there. However, according to the current regulation, finance-related organisations are not permitted to receive those benefits.

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