

Dmitry Medvedev speaks by phone with Prime Minister of Turkey Binali Yildirim

During the conversation, Dmitry Medvedev expressed gratitude to the Turkish side for their prompt and effective cooperation during the evacuation of the crew of the Liman, a Russian naval ship.

The prime ministers also exchanged views on current issues of Russian-Turkish trade and economic cooperation, and discussed the schedule of forthcoming bilateral contacts at various levels.

Approval of the certificate for the priority project Russia's Wildlife: Protect and Appreciate

The main aim of the project is to conceive and test models for developing ecotourism, preserving rare animals and restoring their populations.

The certificate of the Russia's Wildlife: Protect and Appreciate priority project was approved following the meeting of the presidium of the Presidential Council for Strategic Development and Priority Projects of 11 April 2017.

The main aim of the project is to conceive and test models for developing ecotourism, preserving rare animals and restoring their populations.

The project will be implemented from April 2017 through February 2021.

The project consists of two priorities: Ecotourism Development and Rare Species Preservation.

Ecotourism Development envisages the elaboration of models for developing ecotourism as a means of protecting biological and landscape diversity.

At its first stage the project will be implemented in seven pilot nature reserves. Ecotourism development programmes must be created for them, which should include the building of infrastructure, a marketing system, and the greatest possible reduction of the human impact on local ecosystems. International experts will be engaged in the work.

There are plans for programmes to develop natural areas through public-private partnership and operators with recognised international experience in the comprehensive development of nature reserves.

The second stage will be based on the achievements of the pilot programmes. Ecotourism development programmes will be created for another 15 federal nature reserves.

The Rare Species Preservation priority is aimed at restoring and increasing rare animal populations. The Persian leopard population is expected to grow by 580 percent, Far Eastern leopard 90 percent, Przewalski's wild horse 820 percent, aurochs 50 percent, saiga 210 percent, and argali 130 percent.

The priority also envisages the protection of Teletskoye Lake: improving the area, cleaning up rubbish, and preventing further pollution.

Approval of the draft Agreement to Strengthen International Arctic Research Cooperation

The draft Agreement has been submitted by an ad hoc international target group involving Russian representatives under decisions adopted at Arctic Council ministerial sessions. The Agreement aims to advance international research projects in the Arctic, expand contacts between scientists, promote the sharing of research results, simplify border-crossing procedures, and explore the possibility of jointly using research infrastructure

Reference

The document has been submitted by the Russian Foreign Ministry.

The signed directive approves the draft Agreement to Strengthen International Arctic Research Cooperation, hereinafter referred to as the Agreement.

The Agreement was drafted by an ad hoc international target group involving Russian representatives under decisions adopted at Arctic Council ministerial sessions, formalised in the 2013 Kiruna Declaration and the 2015 Iqaluit Declaration.

The Arctic Council is an international regional forum promoting cooperation between Arctic states in the area of environmental protection and the sustained development of polar areas. On 19 September 1996, the declaration establishing the Arctic Council was signed in Ottawa, Canada. Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States are all members of the Arctic Council.

The Agreement aims to advance international research projects in the Arctic, expand contacts between scientists, promote the sharing of research results, simplify border-crossing procedures and explore the possibility of jointly using research infrastructure.

At the same time, it is stipulated that the Parties shall help each other gain access to ground, coastal, atmospheric and high-seas sectors in specific Arctic areas where the states who are party to the agreement exercise sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction, as well as to high-seas areas outside their national jurisdiction north of the 62nd degree northern latitude, for the purpose of conducting previously coordinated research projects

This Agreement is a framework document and provides for the signing, whenever necessary, of specialised agreements or accords on specific projects and aspects of Arctic research cooperation.

For the purposes of the Agreement, each Party shall appoint a competent national agency acting as a responsible coordinator. The Ministry of Education and Science shall act as coordinator on behalf of the Russian Federation.

Signing the Agreement will help expand international cooperation in the Arctic, including research projects.

Government report on its performance in 2016

“The Government of the Russian Federation < ...> shall submit to the State Duma annual reports on the Government’s performance, including on issues formulated by the State Duma.” (Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 114, Clause 1, Subclause “a”).

Excerpts from the transcript:

Government report on its performance in 2016

Dmitry Medvedev: Last year, the State Duma discussed and adopted 284 Government proposed bills, which have since become law. New members joined the Duma’s legislative process immediately after being elected. As a result, 91 draft laws proposed by the Government were approved last autumn and more than 270 are still being considered. These include important draft laws designed to improve the quality of forensic examination and the effectiveness of cyber protection efforts and to reduce road congestion and improve road

safety.

The State Duma election was the main political event last year. Russia's strategy for the next political cycle was determined on a single voting day. It showed that people see consistency and responsibility for the decisions taken, the ability to listen to people and honour one's obligations, as well as winning honestly are the most important elements in the government's work. Our people voted for stability, but they also voted for development. They expect us to do everything in our power to improve their lives and to make success a fact of life in the country. This is society's main political need today. I am convinced that this requirement will also feature in the upcoming presidential campaign. The race for the presidency will be difficult, as it always is. However, I would like to point out that we never turned a political struggle into a war, and we won't do it now. Of course, this doesn't mean that there are no differences. We do have them, which is absolutely normal. But disputes between our political parties, despite the differences in their views and ideologies, only concern the methods for achieving our main goal, which is to continue to develop our country so as to ensure a prosperous life for our people.

On the political side, we have reviewed our ability to resist external pressure and have seen that we can also move forward to promote our interests. In the economy, we saw that we can do more than just respond to crisis situations, that we can also create new growth drivers. We have taken a new look at our opportunities. And we have seen that we can only rely on ourselves. The sanctions pressure continued, and it will likely last for some time yet, and oil prices were low. Nothing has changed in this sense, but we have learned to use the situation to our advantage as we joined the fight for leadership in domestic and international markets. We are no longer afraid of any challenges, because they provide a development impetus. This confidence in our own strength is bringing its first results. Our economy is growing, although many people, including those across the ocean, predicted an economic catastrophe for us. Today, our progress has been acknowledged even by those who cannot be suspected of being partial to Russia.

More to be posted soon...

[Approval of a list of countries whose citizens will be granted simplified procedure for entry into Russia through checkpoints at the free port](#)

of Vladivostok

From a meeting with deputy prime ministers.

Excerpts from the transcript:

Meeting with deputy prime ministers

Dmitry Medvedev: We are actively developing a modern infrastructure in the Russian Far East and are creating special regimes. In March, the law on the entry to the Free Port of Vladivostok was passed.

Several days ago, I approved the [list of countries whose citizens will be granted a privileged](#) status. Business people and tourists won't have to undergo traditional visa procedures. They will only have to submit their data on a special website. Introducing this option will help boost investment and tourist attractiveness in the Russian Far East.

The list contains 18 countries from various regions. It's not about how far away these countries are but—if they want to reciprocate.

Accordingly, we'll make bilateral agreements on visa-free travel with those who share the same approach as us.