



Asia Gaming Brief, which cited an article in the Russian-language Commercial newspaper

The passage of the new bill means he will have to shut down these companies by the last day of next year.

The Asia Gaming Brief reports that a federal law signed in 2009 made gambling illegal in Russia except for four disparate regions, including the Far East Coast, Kaliningrad in the Baltic Sea, Altai in Central Asia and the region around Azov. But President Vladimir Putin reportedly approved an amendment to the measure in May last year that would force gambling houses near Azov to favor a list of additional areas allowed in the Krasana neighborhood

Following Ukraine's political instability, Russia annexed the disputed Crimea three years ago, and reportedly approved the area as a casino-friendly area recently in June 2016. With warm weather and white sandy beaches, the Black Sea Peninsula has long been a holiday destination, and Putin now hopes his efforts will turn the region into one of Eastern Europe's leading tourist hubs.

Smolenschev, however, reportedly complains of failing to find a new home for the Azov casino in the Sochi neighborhood, while wanting confidence that the Azov situation won't repeat before opening a gambling house in Crimea.

"I wrote a letter to Commerzant asking him to lend me the facility (in Sochi), but I didn't get a reply," Smolenschev said. "The same situation happened at the gambling house in Anapa. We were not allowed to participate in the auction."

In addition, David Baguyan, Smolenschev's deputy marketing manager for Azov's division, reportedly told Commerzant that he had yet to receive any guidance from Moscow on the amount expected to be paid by his employer to open a new casino in Crimea.

Baguyan reportedly told CommercialSant, "We are ready to take part in many projects, but the most important thing is to know the exact conditions. They should be clear and transparent. It's still unclear what the site looks like in Crimea, what the situation is like in telecommunications, infrastructure, etc. Without calculating state funds, investment in Azov opening amounts to \$176.82 million. It's hard to understand how much gas gambling costs can be reduced on this road."

Baguyan reportedly explained that Smolenschev's Azov casino paid about \$3.53 million in taxes last year, while adding that his employer invested about \$35.35 million in both businesses but is now unlikely to receive compensation.

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