



# Russia

Last update:	21 February 2017
Population:	144,096,812 million (2015 World Bank est.)
Prime minister:	Dmitry Medvedev
President:	Vladimir Putin
Governemental type:	Federation
Ruling coalition:	One ruling party - United Russia
Last election:	18 September 2016 (parliamentary elections)
Next election:	11 March 2018 (presidential elections)
Sister parties:	

The parliamentary elections on 18 September 2016 granted the ruling United Russia party a constitutional majority in the legislation. Turnout to the new Duma elections was the lowest in the post-Soviet history of Russia, 47.81 percent as compared to 60.1 percent in the 2011 elections. No opposition party managed to cross the 5 percent threshold. Two new counties have been added in the 2016 elections - Crimea and Sevastopol. On the international scene, Russia is criticised for the annexation of Crimea and for supporting separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine. Sanctions have been multiplied by Western countries affecting its economy.

## Political Situation

### Political environment and the Putin election decree

During the first Putin-era, between 2000 and 2008, pressure on democracy and human rights in Russia increased. Besides its increased wealth and political status in the world, Russia has also shown an increased level of human rights violations, repression of opposition parties and organisations, and an increased pressure on independent media. Opposition parties experience increasing difficulties in finding ways to get out their message: the media is increasingly dominated by the state and opposition parties and the civil society has difficulties to organise protests and rallies. These problems are worsened by a 2007 election law. Important changes to the previous law include the abolishment of the possibility to vote 'against all', and the increase of the election threshold for political parties from 5 to 7 percent of the vote to win seats in parliament.

Another difficulty for smaller political parties is the legal minimum number of 50.000 members a party should have to compete in the elections. In July 2007, the Russian Communist Workers Party – Revolutionary Party of Communists challenged this law in court on the ground that the legislation illegally limits the citizens' participation in political life. However, the Constitutional Court ruled in favour of the legislation. The immense personal power that is wielded by the president can also be seen in the 2008 presidential elections, in which Dmitry Medvedev, hailed by Putin as his favourite candidate, won an easy victory in the polls. He competed in the elections with the promise not to change the line of policy Putin set out, and to appoint Putin as his prime minister. Because Putin himself already served two terms, he was prohibited by law from running in the elections.

On 24 September 2011 Dmitry Medvedev endorsed Prime Minister Vladimir Putin for the presidential elections of 2012, which the latter eventually won. Under amendments to the constitution made in 2008 the presidential term was extended to six years, meaning that Putin could stay in power for another 12 years, until 2024.

### Medvedev's liberalised political party law

In December 2012, following the parliamentary elections and the ensuing street protests, President Medvedev proposed reforms liberalising the political party law. The proposal included several measures that would drastically simplify the process of registration for new political parties, and the process of registration of existing political parties for participating in elections. Some specific points include decreasing the required number of members from 50.000 to 500, and decreasing the number of signatures needed for a party's participation in presidential elections from 2.000.000 to 100.000 for parties and 300.000 for individual candidates. The proposal was passed by the Duma in a final reading in early 2012, and by the Federation Council in March 2012. After the

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President's signature it would, theoretically, come into force. However, under President Putin's (3rd term) rule most of the liberalised measures were one by one rescinded, and a harsher political climate was formed.

The Kremlin has gone further and further towards a more consolidated power vertical, limiting any space that may have been left for dissent even further. The State Duma is dominated by United Russia, the power party of Vladimir Putin, MPs that had voiced strong dissenting opinions on major issues were eventually expelled, and opposition political parties and figures are marginalised. The pressure on independent civil society organisations has also been ever increasing, limiting the space for true public debate even further.

**International pressure**

Following the Euro-Maidan events in Ukraine, and the annexation of Crimea in February 2014, Russia has increasingly been under pressure of Western countries, notably the US and the European Union, who have multiplied sanctions against the country. Following a referendum on Sunday 16 March 2014, Crimea declared itself an independent state on Monday 17 March. The newly formed Republic of Crimea formally applied to join the Russian Federation the same day. The West claims the referendum to be illegal and says it will impose new sanctions. They also suspect Moscow of arming and training separatists in Ukraine, as the country is moving towards the EU. They affect Russia's economy while reinforcing its disagreements with the West.

**Elections**

**Electoral system**

After the break-up of the Soviet Union the Russian Federation gained independence on 24 August 1991. The country is a federal democratic republic with a strong presidential system. Previously, the people elected the president for a four-year term, but an amendment to the constitution prolonged the term to six years as of 2012. Vladimir Putin, who served as president from 2000 to 2008, was succeeded by Dmitry Medvedev, his appointed successor. However, Putin was re-elected in 2012 for a third term in office. The Federal Assembly has two chambers: the State Duma (Lower House) has 450 members, elected for a five-year term through a mixed electoral system (half of parliamentarians elected in majoritarian single-mandate districts and half – through party lists). The Federation Council (Upper House) has 170 members, two delegates for each of the 85 regions.

**Parliamentary Elections**

On 18 September 2016, parliamentary elections were held in Russia. The official turnout was 47,81 percent (60,1 percent in 2011).

**Final election results**

Parties	Seats in parliament	% of votes
United Russia	343	54,24 %
Communist Party (CPRF)	42	13,44 %
Liberal Democratic Party	39	13,25 %
Just Russia	23	6,18 %
Rodina	1	1,45 %
Grazhdanskaya Platforma	1	0,22 %
Yabloko	0	1,89 %
Parnas	0	0,71 %
Self-nominated candidate Vladislav Reznik	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	

The ruling United Russia party gained 54,24 percent of the votes, which indicates an increase in support in comparison with the 2011 elections, where the party won 49,32 percent of the votes. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) received 13,44 percent of the counted votes (19,19 percent in 2011), Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) - 13,25 percent (11,67 percent in 2011), and A Just Russia – 6,18 percent (13,24 percent in 2011).

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The other eight parties that participated in the elections – among others Yabloko, Parnas and Patriots of Russia, will not be represented in the parliament, as they did not pass the 5 percent threshold. As Yabloko won less than 3 percent of the votes, it doesn't get the right to receive financial support from the state.

The results mean that the United Russia party gets the constitutional majority that it lost after the previous election.

### **Campaigning**

According to the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), a low level of campaigning and violations during the campaigning process were observed. The activities of the ruling party were generally the most visible and prevalent. The main campaign topics were the socio-economic situation, political stability, patriotism and foreign policy issues. There was no clear political alternative offered in the elections, which limited the voters' choice.

In almost half of the federal subjects, local state bodies attempted to pressure the voters into voting for the governing party and selectively applied notification procedure to deny or condition permissions to hold rallies for the opposition. Media – and especially state media - failed to grant contestants with equitable coverage, with the ruling party receiving more editorial coverage than other contestants.

During the campaign, leaders and several members of the opposition Parnas party were physically attacked (e. g. Mikhail Kasyanov on 10 August in Stavropol) or detained by police. On 3 September in Tyumen, police disrupted an authorized opposition party Yabloko event, briefly detained three participants and confiscated campaign material due to participation of minors. There was also destruction of campaign material and dissemination of false and libelous information about various contestants discrediting them.

### **Alleged violations**

OSCE Election Observation Mission (EOM) recognized Central Election Commission (CEC) administration to be transparent, whereas lower level commissions performed unevenly and lacked impartiality and independence. There were problems with the secrecy of the vote in half of the polling stations. Numerous procedural irregularities were noticed during counting. EOM observers were not able to meaningfully observe the counting and tabulation. At 38 percent of the monitored stations ballots were counted in a manner that not all those present could see the voter's mark. A third of the Precinct Election Commissions results protocols were not posted for public scrutiny.

Opposition members reported instances of mass lifts (to the polling stations; illegal if organised by a candidate or his/her affiliated structures) and 'cruise voting' or carroussel voting, where the same voters are taken around several polling stations to vote several times with an absentee authorisation.

Election monitoring group Golos had received more than 2,000 complaints of suspected vote rigging from all over the country by early afternoon on 18 September. Among the reported violations were long lines of soldiers voting at stations where they weren't registered, and voters casting their ballots on tables instead of curtained-off voting booths.

### **International reactions**

The U.S. State Department noted that the election commission "administered the elections transparently", but added that it shares OSCE observers' concern about limitations during the candidate registration process, misuse of administrative resources by some local authorities during the campaign and harassment of opposition members.

Great Britain and the European Union didn't recognise election results in Crimea and Sevastopol.

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## Presidential Elections

On 4 March 2012 presidential elections took place in Russia, in which 63 percent of the Russians cast their ballot.

### **Final election results**

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Candidates	% of the votes
Vladimir Putin (United Russia)	63,6 %
Gennady Zyuganov (leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation)	17,18 %
Mikhail Prokhorov (Russian billionaire)	7,98 %
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia)	6,22 %
Sergei Mironov (presiding the fair Russia party)	3,85 %

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister during Medvedev's presidency and his predecessor from 1999 until 2008, was re-elected with 63.6 percent of the votes. Consequently, he secured a mandate for at least 6 years according to a law amendment in 2008 in which the presidential term was extended with 2 years.

The other four candidates all received less than 20 percent of the votes. Gennady Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party, gained 17.18 percent, which is almost equal to the votes he gained in the last presidential elections in 2008. Mikhail Prokhorov, a Russian billionaire, obtained 7.92 percent. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia acquired 6.22 percent of the ballots, a similar result to the last elections in which he was running for president as well. Sergei Mironov, leader of the Just Russia party, garnered 3.85 percent of the votes.

### Alleged fraud

Opposition leaders and independent monitors stated that large-scale fraud was involved in the elections, including carousel voting, forced voting and ballot-box stuffing. According to the independent NGO Golos observers only 50,18 percent of the votes was garnered by Putin if fraud had not occurred, which nevertheless represents a small majority, just enough to save him from a run-off. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) initially stated that the voting had been "assessed positively overall and had produced a clear winner with an absolute majority". The organisation admitted, however, that the "voter's choice was limited, electoral competition lacked fairness and an impartial referee was missing". Tonino Picula, presiding over the OSCE observer mission in Russia, said that "there were serious problems from the very start of this election. The point of elections is that the outcome should be uncertain. This was not the case in Russia. There was no real competition and abuse of government resources ensured that the ultimate winner of the election was never in doubt". 685 election observers were accredited to monitor the elections, and over 90 thousand webcams recorded the conduct in the voting booths, which according to a member of the United Russia party prevented 99 percent of the possible violations.

### International reactions

Many prominent politicians denounced the irregularities in the presidential elections. Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign policy chief, did not congratulate Putin on his re-election. On behalf of the EU, she looked forward to cooperating with the newly elected president "in full support of our shared modernisation agenda, which we see as covering both economic and political reforms", she said. Ashton referred at the irregularities in the elections, and called on Russia to "address these shortcomings". Javier Barroso (president of the European Commission) and Herman van Rompuy (president of the European Council) did not make any statements. These reactions stand in sharp contrast with the 2008 presidential elections won by Medvedev, as he was congratulated both by Ashton's predecessor and Barroso at the time. Martin Schulz, presiding over the European Parliament, expressed his concern about the violations in the elections and the limited alternatives for the voters.

## Social Democratic Parties

### Other Parties

#### United Russia (ER)

Party Leader: Vladimir Putin

Number of seats: 343

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<http://er.ru/>

United Russia is the largest political party in contemporary Russia and is considered to be the 'party of power'. Since 15 April 2008, Vladimir Putin has been the chairman of the party. United Russia was founded in April 2001 when the parties Fatherland – All Russia, led by the then Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, and the Unity Party of Russia merged.

In 2003 the party published its political manifesto called 'The Path of National Success'. United Russia is a conservative party whose goal is to unite political forces and support the Russian president in order to enhance national unity. They reject the classical concept of left-wing and right-wing politics as they depart from a static notion of political centrism. United Russia supports a mixed economy in which a free market is combined with state regulation. Economic benefits should be redistributed for the most part to the poorest people.

The party claims to have 2,01 million members (2010) and occupied 238 out of 450 seats in the State Duma after the December 2011 elections, which did not give it a constitutional majority. These results indicated that the party started to lose its popularity.

Nevertheless, in the 2016 elections a majority of Russians voted for United Russia.

### Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF)

Party Leader: Gennady Zyuganov

Number of seats: 42

<http://kprf.ru/>

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) is the biggest political party after United Russia and it is the most influential opposition party in the Russian Federation. The CPRF might be considered as a successor to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) but differs in many respects. Its leader, Gennady Zyuganov, co-founded the party in 1993 together with other senior Soviet politicians.

The CPRF, as it is formed by Zyuganov, is popular-patriotic in character. It is not a strict communist party, as it no longer prohibits religion and opts for a mixed economy. Its main characteristics are the demand for a strong state, economic equality for the citizens of Russia and social justice for all. It targets the wealth of the new class of oligarchs. Therefore, the CPRF is especially popular with pensioners, industrial workers and non-profit organisations' employees.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was prohibited for a while in Russia because of its attempt to overthrow Gorbachev in August 1991. In 1992 a court ruling allowed the party to return to the political scene. Several former Soviet Communists started new communist parties in Russia, but only Zyuganov's CPRF managed to become successful. In 1996 Gennady Zyuganov entered the first presidential elections and competed against Boris Yeltsin. He finished second with 32 percent of the votes. Yeltsin won with 35 percent. During Putin's presidency Zyuganov was less popular, but still a political force to be reckoned with.

Zyuganov stood as candidate for the presidential elections in 2008 and again in 2012. In the last elections he received 17,18 percent of the votes and did not have a chance against Vladimir Putin, who collected 63,6 percent of the votes. The CPRF was more successful in the last regional and legislative elections. Following the results of the legislative elections on 4 December 2011, the CPRF held 92 seats in the parliament, which was an increase in comparison with the 2007 elections, after which the party held 57 seats. In 2016 the CPRF acquired 42 seats.

### Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)

Party Leader: Vladimir Zhirinovskiy

Number of seats: 39

<http://www.ldpr.ru/#>

The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) was founded in 1989 by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy as the second official party in the Soviet Union. It fulfilled the role of being an opposition party, but according to former Soviet Communist Party politburo member Alexander Yakovlev, the LDPR was created by KGB director Vladimir Kryuchkov as a puppet party to control the opposition. In the

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West, the LDPR is known most for its leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who created a personality-cult which absorbs all the party's attention and time. Zhirinovskiy is Vice-Chairman of the State Duma.

The party's ideology is one of extreme nationalism with imperialistic aspirations, and inclined to strong, even fascist, authoritarian beliefs. The methods it uses, both in and outside the Duma, are highly populist which accounts for the party's ambiguity over economic questions. The LDPR draws most of its support from the marginalised populations of the provinces who have suffered most from transition and reform. Notwithstanding its oppositional stance, in almost all cases, the LDPR votes in favour of the Russian President.

Following the results of the legislative elections of 4 December 2011, the LDPR held 56 seats in the State Duma, that was an increase in comparison with the 40 seats it had after the 2007 elections. The elections of 2016 brought LDPR 39 seats.

### A Just Russia Party (Fair Russia) (SR)

Party Leader: Sergey Mironov  
Number of seats: 23  
<http://www.spravedlivo.ru>

A Just Russia, also translated as 'Fair Russia', was created in 2006, through a merger of three political organisations: Rodina (Motherland), the Russian Pensioners' Party and the Russian Party of Life. A Just Russia is a leftist social democratic party and plays its role as an alternative to United Russia, Communist Party or Liberal Democratic Party of Russia. In the 2010 regional elections they received an average vote of 15 percent. In the last parliamentary elections A Just Russia gained 23 seats.

A Just Russia calls for a welfare state with less economic inequality, but protecting individual property rights and maintaining a market economy. Under Sergey Mironov, the party has presented itself as a socialist alternative to the Communist Party and describes its ideology as "New Socialism of the 21st century", but emphasises that it does not wish to return to Soviet style communism. In the 2007–2011 Duma, A Just Russia declared absolute opposition to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's government, voting against the government's budgets in 2010 and 2011. However, since 2012 there was a noticeable change of the party's course. In December 2012, most lawmakers from A Just Russia supported the Kremlin-backed "scoundrels' law" that banned adoptions of Russian orphans by U.S. citizens and placed new restrictions on nongovernmental organisations. Later on, party leader Sergei Mironov issued an ultimatum to four of party's oppositional activists to choose between party membership or oppositional protest movements. Those party's actions are a final confirmation that the party is not an opposition party. Nowadays, the party mostly serves as a left-wing opponent party to show that the pluralism and multiparty system within the parliament exists while in reality the party is always ready to provide parliamentary votes for United Russia.

Just Russia has the status of full member at the Socialist International (SI). The party has no official relations with the European Social Democrats or Party of European Social Democrats (PES).

### Yabloko

Party Leader: Emilia Slabunova  
Number of seats: 0  
<http://www.yabloko.ru/>

The Russian United Democratic Party Yabloko was formed in 1993 by Grigory Yavlinsky, Yuri Boldyrev and Vladimir Lukin. Yabloko means 'apple' and is an acronym of the founders' names. From the beginning in 1993 until 2008 Yavlinsky was the party leader. In 2001 he was succeeded by Moscow City Duma deputy, Sergey Mitrokhin.

Yabloko is a social liberal political party. In the beginning of the nineties they were fierce adherents of greater freedom and civil liberties in Russia, as well as the introduction of a free market economy. Since the Russian presidency became more authoritarian under Putin's regime they have warned for the deterioration of democracy in Russia. Yabloko has felt the consequences of Putin's 'managed democracy' as well. In 1995 it reached its peak with 45 seats in the State Duma. In the 2011 parliamentary elections Yabloko only received 3,43 percent of the votes, which means the party was not represented in the State Duma. The situation was not changed by the 2016 elections, in which only 1,86 percent of the voters supported Yabloko.

This decrease in political power also has to do with the lack of popularity of liberal ideas in Russia and internal conflicts in Yabloko.

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Criticism of Yavlinski grew within the party after Yabloko failed to gain representation in the Duma in the latest parliamentary elections in 2003 and 2007. After the failed elections of December 2007 (1,7 percent of the votes), there were increasing calls for his resignation. Yavlinski was succeeded in June 2008 as party leader by Sergey Mitrochin, leader of the Moscow branch of Yabloko. With the election of Mitrokhin, Yabloko seems to have chosen for the moderate wing of the party as opposed to the more radical wing, which is led, amongst others, by Yabloko St Petersburg leader Maksim Reznik, a chapter that historically has the most difficulty with the Moscow party leadership.

Yabloko is a member of the Liberal International.

### People's Freedom Part (PARNAS)

Party Leader: Mikhail Kasyanov

Number of seats: 0

<https://parnasparty.ru/>

The People's Freedom Party (for Russia without lawlessness and corruption) was founded in December 2010 by opposition politicians: (no longer registered) Republican Party chairman Vladimir Ryzhkov, chairman of the People's Democratic Union Mikhail Kasyanov, one of the prominent leaders of the 'Solidarnost' movement Boris Nemtsov, and leader of the movement Democratic Choice, Vladimir Milov. The party was formed on the basis of a coalition of four organisations of its co-founders. At the founding conference of the party Kasyanov, Milov, Nemtsov and Ryzhkov were elected co-chairmen of the party with the Russian acronym ParNaS. In September 2011 Kasyanov, Nemtsov and Ryzhkov were re-elected as co-chairmen of the party.

The party is very critical of Putin's regime. Its stated goal is to return Russia to the path of democracy and restore respect for the constitution.

In June 2011, PARNAS was denied registration. The Justice Ministry said the party's petition had dozens of false names and contradictions in its statutes. PARNAS called the decision political, but in any case lost any chance of participating in the December 2011 elections. The party decided to continue its activities and was an active participant in the street protests that followed the December elections.

In 2016 elections PARNAS received 0,7% percent of the votes.

### Progress Party

Party Leader: Alexei Navalny

Number of seats: 0

<https://partyprogress.org/>

The Progress Party supports Alexei Navalny, an activist who promotes democracy and tries to fight political corruption. In 2012 the party was established under the name "People's Alliance" by founder Leonid Volkov. At the beginning of April 2013, the party tried to register itself by the Ministry of Justice, but they declined the application. During a party congress two months later the party adopted amendments, necessary for re-submission. However, the Ministry refused to register the Progress Party again. In November 2013, Navalny became a member of the Progress Party. He did not join the party sooner because he ran in the Moscow mayoral election in September 2013. One month later Navalny became chairman and the party introduced a new program. The main goal of the party is to fight corruption. In February 2014 the Progress Party was official registered as a party by the Ministry of Justice. However, two months later, the Ministry announced the possibility of a review of the registration of the party.

In 2016 the party was not allowed to participate in the Duma elections.

### The Other Russia

Party Leader: Eduard Limonov

Number of seats: 0

<http://drugoros.ru/>

The Other Russia was a broad organisation connecting several political parties and NGOs that were united as an opposition

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movement throughout 2006-2010. The Other Russia was formed in July 2006. The movement represented itself as a “national platform” and did not run for elections.

Its task was to “restore civil control of power in Russia, a control that is guaranteed in the Russian Constitution that is so frequently and unambiguously violated today. This aim requires a return to the principles of federalism and the separation of powers. It calls for the restoration of the social function of the state with regional self-administration and the independence of the media. The judicial system must protect every citizen equally, especially from the dangerous impulses of the representatives of power. It is our duty to free the country from outbreaks of prejudice, racism, and xenophobia and from the looting of our national riches by government officials”.

The Other Russia was particularly known for the organisation of several ‘Marches of the Discontented’ in big Russian cities. The first one took place in Moscow on 16 December 2006 and was led by Garry Kasparov, former World Chess Champion, and other opposition leaders. These protests were some of the largest Russia had seen in preceding years. Demonstrations also took place before the presidential elections of 2008, with often negative and biased coverage from the Russian media. The marches still continued on the 31st day of the month, referring to Article 31 of the Russian Constitution, which states that Russian citizens have the right to assemble, a right that is often blocked by the Russian government. During these demonstrations many activists were regularly arrested, like Eduard Limonov, leader of the National Bolshevik Party (now called The Other Russia).

In July 2010 a political party The Other Russia was established by Eduard Limonov. It didn’t participate in elections yet.

## Biographies

### Vladimir Putin

President

Vladimir Putin was born in Leningrad (now St Petersburg) on 7 October 1952. He graduated in 1975 with a degree in law from the Leningrad State University. In 1997 he earned a PhD in economics for his thesis on “Strategic Planning of Regional Raw Material Operations in a Market Economy”. After his graduation in 1975 Putin started working for the KGB. He was stationed in East-Germany from 1985 to 1990.

Upon his return to Leningrad he became assistant to the rector of the Leningrad State University at the department of International Affairs. Next he became an advisor to the chairman of the Leningrad City Council. He soon made a career within the St Petersburg city council as chairman of the Council’s International Relations Committee in 1991. From 1994 he started working as First Deputy Mayor of St Petersburg.

In 1996 he started working as a state official with the national government. In May 1998, he was promoted to first deputy head of the Presidential Administration and two months later he became head of the Federal Security Service. In March 1999 Putin also started working as Secretary of the Security Council. In August 1999 he was appointed Prime Minister by President Boris Yeltsin.

On 31 December 1999 Putin became acting President of the Russian Federation and on 26 March 2000 he was officially elected with 53 percent of the votes. After his popular first term as president he was re-elected in March 2004. After two presidential terms Putin had to resign, because the Russian constitution prevents three consecutive presidential terms. Therefore Putin appointed Dmitry Medvedev in 2008 as his successor and became Prime Minister again himself. In March 2012, he was re-elected for a third presidential time with 63,6 percent of the votes. A law amendment in 2008 extended the presidential term with 2 years, hence Putin will stay in office for at least 6 years and may run for re-election in 2018.

Vladimir Putin is married to Lyudmila Putina and they have two daughters.

### Dmitry Medvedev

Prime Minister

Dmitry Medvedev was born on 14 September 1965, in Leningrad (now St Petersburg). He graduated from the Faculty of Law at the Leningrad State University in 1987 and completed his post graduate studies at the Leningrad State University in 1990. Medvedev

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holds a PhD in law and the title of associate professor.

Between 1990 and 1999 Medvedev was a lecturer at the St Petersburg State University. Simultaneously, he was an adviser to the Chairman of the Leningrad City Council and an expert consultant to the St Petersburg City Hall's Committee for External Affairs between 1990 and 1995. In 1999, he was named Deputy Government Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office. In 2000, his position was upgraded to the First Deputy of Staff.

Between 2000 and 2001, Medvedev was the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gazprom. In October he was appointed Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office. Two years later, in November, he was appointed First Deputy Prime Minister.

On 17 December 2007, Medvedev was endorsed by the ruling United Russia party as a candidate in the presidential elections in 2008, following the endorsement of its leader, Vladimir Putin. On 2 March 2008, Medvedev was elected President of Russia, succeeding Putin with 70.28 percent of the votes. After a four-year-term he nominated Putin as the party's presidential candidate, himself heading the party's list in parliamentary elections.

Medvedev is married and has one son.

### Sergey Mironov

Leader of 'A Just Russia' party

Sergey Mironov was born in Pushkin, near Leningrad (now St Petersburg) on 14 February 1953. Between 1971 and 1973 he served in the Soviet Army. In 1980 he graduated from the Leningrad Mining Institute, in 1992 from the St Petersburg State Technical University, in 1997 with honours from the Academy of State Service of the President of the Russian Federation and in 1998 with honours from the St Petersburg State University. He has a technical, economic and legal education.

Between 1978 and 1986 Mironov worked as engineer-geophysicist in various places. After a brief time of working as an engineer he entered politics and in 1994 he was elected deputy of the St Petersburg Legislative Assembly. In 2001 he entered the Federation Council of Russia as representative of St Petersburg. In 2001 he became Speaker of the Federation Council, but was dismissed in 2011 under unclear circumstances.

Since April 2003 he was Chairman of the Russian Party of Life. A political party that does not exist anymore. In October 2006 he became the leader of the new center-left opposition party 'A Just Russia'. Mironov was a candidate in the 2004 presidential elections but said he supported Putin. He received less than 1 percent of the votes. He supports the extension of the length and increased amount of consecutive presidential terms.

Sergey Mironov is married to Lyubov Ivanovna. He has two children.

### Alexei Navalny

Leader of the Progress Party

Alexei Navalny, born 4 June 1976, is a Russian lawyer, political and financial activist, and politician. In 2009 he gained prominence in Russia by criticizing President Vladimir Putin and the amount of corruption the country faces. Navalny has a blog and organised large-scale demonstrations to promote democracy and to attack political corruption. According to the Wall Street Journal he is "the man Vladimir Putin fears the most" (2012). In September 2013 he ran in the Moscow mayoral election and came in second, with 27 percent of the votes. According to him this amount was higher, but authorities have committed fraud to make sure a pro Putin candidate became mayor. Navalny has been arrested numerous times. In July 2013 he was convicted of embezzlement and was sentenced to five years in a corrective labor colony, but after one day he was released. Navalny is chairman of the Progress Party and has intentions to run for president in the next elections.

Navalny is married and has two children.

### Grigoriy Yavlinskiy

Founder and former leader of the Yabloko party

Grigoriy Yavlinskiy was born in Lviv, Ukraine, on 10 April 1952. He graduated from the Moscow agricultural institute of H.V. Plehanov and defended a PhD in chemical industry. He ran twice for Russia's presidency – in 1996, against Boris Yeltsin, finishing

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fourth with 7.3 percent of the votes; and in 2000, against Vladimir Putin, finishing third with 5.8 percent. He did not run in 2004 or 2008, after his party failed to cross the 5 percent threshold in the 2003 Duma elections. In 2012 presidential election he was prevented from running for president by Russian authorities, despite collecting 2 million signatures of Russian citizens for his candidacy, as was demanded by law.

Yavlinskiy is one of the founders of Yabloko and has been its leader for many years (1993-2008). In 2003 he developed a plan for dismantling the oligarchic system in Russia in 2003. Since 2011 he has been a member of the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly and focuses on budget procedure law, energy saving and development strategy.

He was nominated as Yabloko's presidential candidate for the 2018 elections. The main goals of Yavlinskiy as a 2018 Presidential candidate are: termination of state lies, abolition of repressive anti-civil laws, release of political prisoners, renouncement of confrontations with Europe and the world, termination of military-political ventures and normalisation of relations with Ukraine.

### Source

#### General information:

- [BBC](#)
- [CIA World Factbook](#)
- [Election Committee Russia](#)
- [Euobserver](#)
- [Euractiv](#)
- [Human Rights Watch](#)
- [Kremlin](#)
- [Moscow Times](#)
- [NRC](#)
- [OpenDemocracy](#)
- [OSCE Elections observation mission Final Report Parliamentary elections \(12 January 2012\)](#)
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- [Russian Energy Policy Toward Neighboring Countries \(Sept 2009\) CRS Report for Congress](#)
- [Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests \(January 2010\) CRS Report for Congress](#)
- [Russia-U.S. Relations and Russia's vision for international affairs \(13 April 2010 Washington D.C.\) The Brookings Institution](#)

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