

Poll Shows Putin, Kirkorov People of the Year

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Russians were steadfast in their tastes and political preferences this year, with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and notorious pop star Filipp Kirkorov voted as politician and musician of the year in a survey released Thursday.

Putin single-handedly topped the politician of the year poll with 55 percent of the vote, the Kremlin-friendly VTsIOM pollster [said](#) on its web site. President Dmitry Medvedev was second with 37 percent, while the flamboyant leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, came in a distant third at 5 percent.

Putin, who heads the ruling United Russia party, improved his showing from last year, when he led with 50 percent of the vote. Medvedev was second in 2009 with 33 percent. Both leaders have left open the possibility that they will run for the country's top job in 2012.

Respondents said this summer's wildfires in Russia were the most important global event. Medvedev's decision to sack Mayor Yury Luzhkov was voted the top domestic event of the year, surpassing the wildfires, which made both lists, as well as violent nationalist riots in

Moscow this month.

Kirkorov has been in the spotlight over the past few weeks for beating a television producer, but apparently the scandal only boosted his popularity. The pop star, who settled with his victim earlier this month, led the vote at 8 percent, dethroning last year's winner, crooner Nikolai Baskov.

Other winners included pulp fiction queen Daria Dontsova for writer of the year — her fourth straight win in VTsIOM's annual poll — and Arsenal midfielder Andrei Arshavin, who was named the top athlete. James Cameron's "Avatar" was voted movie of the year.

The poll, conducted last weekend, covered 1,600 respondents in 43 regions and had a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points.

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