

Medvedev Vows More Reforms, Considers Elections for Senate

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President Dmitry Medvedev has promised to introduce more political reforms, including possible direct elections for the Federation Council, amid reports that he will announce whether he will run for re-election at a United Russia congress in late September.

Medvedev told Kremlin pool reporters in Sochi on Thursday that the political system must be reformed "gradually but rigorously."

Medvedev said he did not intend to "throw away all that was done in the last 10 to 12 years" but "make corrections to all the institutions of the political system," Interfax reported.

As part of the reform, the parliament must be "reinforced" to allow parties to become "more active" and parliamentary probes "more efficient," he said.

"As for the Federation Council, I do not rule out that it might be good to turn to the idea of its

election," Medvedev said.

Meanwhile, a source close to the Kremlin and a Kremlin-connected analyst predicted that Medvedev or Prime Minister Vladimir Putin would reveal whether one of them would run for president in March at United Russia's congress on Sept. 23 and 24.

The source told Kommersant in a story [published](#) Thursday that Medvedev, who said Wednesday that he would address the Moscow congress, would use the opportunity to announce his plans for March.

Gleb Pavlovsky, an analyst with the Kremlin-connected Foundation for Effective Politics, said that even if Putin and Medvedev did not say directly whether they will run, the congress would make their decision clear, Ekho Moskvyy radio [reported](#).

Kommersant, citing a United Russia official, said the party and the Kremlin would decide soon whether Putin or Medvedev would chair the congress and whether they would sit together there.

Alexei Mukhin, an analyst with the Center for Political Information, said Medvedev's comments about election reforms aimed to help him "keep his political weight," but it was too early to predict whether Medvedev would run.

Another analyst, Alexei Makarkin of the Center for Political Technologies, said Medvedev's remarks were "a small step" toward his possible candidacy in March.

He said it was reasonable to expect that Putin and Medvedev might announce their plans at the congress. He added that he believed Medvedev had wanted the issue resolved months ago, but Putin benefited from waiting until after the December parliamentary elections since United Russia is likely to win most of the votes.

Medvedev was elected president in March 2008 after campaigning with promises of democratic political reforms. But the changes he has introduced have been minor and are largely viewed as cosmetic.

During his presidency, Putin abolished direct gubernatorial elections in 2004, raised the threshold for parties to get into the State Duma in 2007 and the same year became the leader of United Russia without joining as a member.

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