

Back at Work, Duma Passes OECD's Anti-Bribery Act

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In its first session of the New Year, the newly elected State Duma completed a key step in Russia's efforts to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's by ratifying the group's [anti-bribery convention](#).

Duma deputies signed the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials on Friday

to "enhance the attractiveness of the national economy and attract investment," Kommersant reported.

The move, along with Russia's completing negotiations for WTO membership, has been widely viewed as among the most important steps in securing a place in the OECD.

The legislature also on Friday elected [150 deputy committee heads](#), handing half the posts to the ruling United Russia party.

Notable appointees from United Russia included world chess champion Anatoly Karpov, who became first deputy head of the natural resources committee, and Soviet-era singer Iosif Kobzon, who was named first deputy head of the culture committee.

Dzakhan Pollyeva, a former aide to President Dmitry Medvedev, became the Duma's chief of staff, RIA-Novosti [reported](#).

The meeting marks the second time the Duma has assembled since the widely challenged parliamentary elections on Dec. 4, which were rife with allegations of voting fraud.

An effort by the minority parties to investigate the Dec. 4 voting results was promptly [blocked](#) by United Russia, which still maintains a narrow majority of 238 of 450 seats, despite losing 77 in the disputed elections. The party argued that such an inquiry would not be permitted by law while the presidential campaign for the March election was underway.

The Duma did, however, [invite](#) Central Elections Commission head Vladimir Churov and other officials to come before parliament on Jan. 27 to discuss alleged election violations.

Lawmakers also decided to consider in February amendments to simplify registration requirements for political parties, RIA-Novosti [reported](#).

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