

Poll Says Putin's Voter Support Up to 53%

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Support among voters for presidential candidate Vladimir Putin has increased 5 percent over the last month and is now at 53 percent, according to data released Friday by state-run pollster VTsIOM, RIA-Novosti reported.

Russia's long-time leader could win the presidency in the March 4 election without a second round if he garners more than 50 percent of the vote.

Putin is far ahead his rivals in terms of voter support, with Communist Party candidate Gennady Zyuganov in second place at 10.3 percent and Liberal Democratic Party candidate Vladimir Zhirinovsky in third at 8.2 percent.

Billionaire businessman Mikhail Prokhorov polled at 4.6 percent, an increase of 2.3 percent from a month before, overtaking A Just Russia candidate Sergei Mironov, for whom 3.3 percent of those polled said they would vote.

The poll by VTsIOM asked the voting preferences of 1,600 people in 46 regions of Russia and was conducted Feb. 4 to 5.

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