

Duma to Quiz Putin on WTO and Infrastructure Projects

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Vladimir Putin will make his final visit to the State Duma as prime minister on Wednesday. **Andrei Makhonin**

Vladimir Putin will face questions about state privatizations, Russia's WTO entry and the Cabinet's slow implementation of infrastructure projects during his final address to the State Duma as prime minister Wednesday.

Putin, who will be inaugurated as president May 7, will deliver his annual report of the government's performance for the past year to the Duma at noon, and each of the four parties represented in the chamber will be allowed to pose three questions.

First Deputy Duma Speaker Ivan Melnikov, a Communist, said Tuesday that his party had submitted five questions to Putin's office — including inquiries on privatization plans and "the enormous costs" of Russia's WTO accession and cooperation with NATO on Russian soil.

"There are a variety of topics ... but they all boil down to one thing: a deliberation about what has and will lead the government's liberal-social economic course," Melnikov told Interfax.

He also said the Communists hoped Putin would offer a frank and critical assessment of the government's work. "Our desire is one thing: to hear a critical take on acute problems and not the usual ready-made remarks for ruling party deputies or a monologue for television viewers," he said.

The Liberal Democratic Party, meanwhile, intends to ask Putin what measures the government will undertake to improve the accuracy of its macroeconomic forecasts, Interfax reported. It said the forecasts have differed significantly from real data in recent years, undermining the reliability of federal spending figures.

Party deputies also want to know why the Cabinet has not met its goals in the development of transportation, road construction and energy modernization and the development of the regions.

The question that the party plans to pose is: "How can you explain this chronic phenomenon — weak management, insufficient economic justification for these programs, corruption, or an inability to rationally construct public-private partnerships?"

The party said all of its questions for Putin were "purely economic" in nature.

Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin, a United Russia member, said Monday that Putin would highlight the government's current and future problems during his presentation.

Separately, Naryshkin said Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev would visit the Duma on Friday to discuss police reform and address deputies' concerns about police wrongdoing, including "the tragic event in one of the police stations in Kazan," according to Interfax. Kazan resident Sergei Nazarov, 52, died March 9 after police officers purportedly beat him and sodomized him with a champagne bottle.

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