

Medvedev Joins United Russia

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Medvedev showing off his brand-new United Russia membership card. **Dmitry Astakhov**

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev officially joined United Russia on Tuesday, becoming Russia's first prime minister to ever hold party membership.

Medvedev received membership card No. 84553090 the day after submitting his application.

“It is a very important [moment] in my life,” Medvedev said after receiving the card, Interfax reported.

Medvedev's party membership comes just days before the United Russia convention where he is expected to officially succeed President Vladimir Putin as party leader this week. Senior United Russia Deputy Sergei Neverov confirmed Tuesday that Medvedev would be nominated to head the party at a special convention scheduled for Friday and Saturday.

Putin nominated Medvedev for the job in April. Unlike Medvedev, Putin headed the party from 2008 to 2012 without becoming an official member.

According to party regulations, a candidate wanting to join United Russia has to be listed as an

official supporter for at least six months. But party officials said Medvedev headed United Russia's ticket at the December parliamentary elections, which counted as official support.

Medvedev said he plans to deliver a report on the future modernization of United Russia during the convention.

One priority he mentioned at the ceremony was to reshuffle the party leadership and bring in new faces, RIA-Novosti reported.

United Russia has suffered a considerable decline in popular support lately, hitting a record low in the December State Duma elections with less than 50 percent support. Party critics claim that even that figure was inflated as a result of election fraud.

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