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Minister: Independent Directors Maintaining Share of State Board Seats

By The Moscow Times

December 03, 2012



The number of government officials on the boards of state companies will not increase, Economic Development Minister Andrei Belousov said Tuesday, Interfax reported.

"We had until Dec. 1 to prepare draft directives with candidates for the boards of directors of state companies," Belousov said. "Nothing is changing there in terms of the setup. There is not a single minister there."

"There are deputy [ministers] there [in the proposed lists of candidates], but a very small number," he continued. "There won't be an increase. On the contrary, independent directors are now advancing very actively there. Some boards of directors have simply changed beyond recognition thanks to the fact that the number of independent directors and the number of professional appointees has increased significantly there."

The minister was reacting to a Kommersant report that said the draft list of candidates

indicates that at 70 percent of state firms officials will return to the board or the number of them will increase.

Former President Dmitry Medvedev booted top government officials off the boards of state companies in a wide-ranging housecleaning in early 2011. Igor Sechin, chairman of state oil major Rosneft, was the highest-profile casualty.

Kommersant wrote that three government officials — Deputy Economic Development Minister Sergei Belyakov, Deputy Regional Development Minister Vladimir Kogan and Deputy Energy Minister Pavel Fyodorov — may replace senior managers on the board of state monopoly gas exporter Gazprom.

Two officials, including Deputy Energy Minister Mikhail Kurbatov, may join the boards of powerhouses Rushydro and Inter RAO. Kurbatov is also expected to join MRSK Holding and Federal Grid Co., while former Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko may become their chairman.

No comment was immediately available from the government on the report. The state property agency declined to comment.

(Reuters, MT)

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