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Putin Rated 3rd Most Powerful Person by Forbes

By The Moscow Times

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Russian President Vladimir Putin came third in Forbes magazine's annual list of the world's most powerful people, down one position from last year's ranking.

For the second year in a row, first place went to recently re-elected U.S. President Barack Obama. German Chancellor Angela Merkel came in second, up from fourth in 2011.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates was given fourth place, moving up one position from last year, and was followed by Pope Benedict XVI, who also improved his ranking since 2011.

Forbes' top 10 also included Ben Bernanke, head of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Mario Draghi of the European Central Bank, Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, General Secretary of China's Communist Party Xi Jinping and British Prime Minister David Cameron.

Other powerful Russians included in the top 100 were Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev (61st),

business magnate Alisher Usmanov (67th) and Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller (70th).

The Forbes ranking is based on four criteria: the number of people the person controls, the financial resources at his or her disposal, how actively the person uses their power and his or her ability to exert influence on various spheres of life.

Commenting on this year's ranking, Forbes online supplement wrote: "Russian autocrat Vladimir Putin (#3) scored points because he so frequently shows his strength — like when he jails protesters."

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