

Golikova Tipped as Audit Chamber Head

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Sergei Stepashin

Former Health and Social Development Minister Tatyana Golikova might replace Sergei Stepashin as head of the Audit Chamber, the public finance watchdog, before the end of this summer, Kommersant reported Wednesday.

Golikova, currently an aide to President Vladimir Putin, may be selected as head of the Audit Chamber as a result of a law that took effect Friday and changed the procedure for electing the watchdog's governing body, Kommersant reported, citing unidentified sources.

Before the April 5 law, the term of the chamber's governing body was to expire in 2016 and 2017.

Under the new law, the watchdog's head, deputy head and all of the 12 auditors are to be re-elected by October 1, 2013. Lawmakers representing the Just Russia party have argued that the goal of the law is to replace Stepashin's team, saying that it is known for its "integrity, uncompromising attitude and professionalism."

In February, Stepashin said Russia lost 2 billion rubles in misappropriated state funds in 2012. In January, Stepashin announced plans to probe pricing at Aeroflot and, for the first time in five years, Gazprom's spending.

The paper's sources said relations between Putin and Stepashin, who was prime minister under President Boris Yeltsin, "remain at a good level" but authorities wanted to "give a new impulse" to the chamber's work and restructure it. The Kremlin has started consultations about the possible replacement of Stepashin, according to the sources.

Stepashin may raise the issue about the new composition of his agency in the next two weeks, he allegedly told his subordinates Monday, Kommersant reported.

Stepashin's deputy head Valery Goreglyad told Kommersant that Stepashin had made no official declarations about the re-election of the chamber, but that the watchdog's members wanted it to happen as soon as possible so that it obstructed the chamber's work as little as possible.

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