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Mayoral Debates To be Broadcast Live

By The Moscow Times

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The debates leading up to Moscow's Sept. 8 mayoral election will be broadcast live on television and radio.

Earlier, Yury Zhiganov, a program director at Moskva Media, had announced that the debates would be broadcast with a delay because there was no technical possibility of a live broadcast — an explanation ridiculed by opposition candidates.

Now, "the possibility has been found," Zhiganov told Kommersant.

The Communist Party's Ivan Melnikov and Yabloko's Sergei Mitrokhin are believed to have demanded a live broadcast.

Twelve rounds of debates will be held from August 12 to September 6, three each on the television channels "Moskva 24" and "Doveriye" and the same number each on the radio stations "Moskva FM" and "Govorit Moskva".

The debates will feature all the candidates who want to participate on the same stage.

A Kommersant source in Moscow Media said that acting Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has told the company that he will not participate. Earlier, he said that he had no desire to participate but had not made a final decision.

Members of Just Russia candidate Nikolai Levichev's campaign did not eliminate the possibility that Sobyanin would join the debates at the last minute. Leonid Volkov, the head of RPR-Parnas candidate Alexei Navalny's campaign, said, "To me it seems that until 9 p.m. Monday we won't know whether he's participating."

Navalny's 9 percent support in the most current polls is the closest to Sobyanin's 55 percent. Melnikov, Mitrokhin, Levichev and Mikhail Degtyarev from the Liberal Democratic Party all have 4 percent support or less.

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