

Civil Platform to Appoint City's Business Ombudsman

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Billionaire politician Mikhail Prokhorov has accepted acting Mayor Sergei Sobyanin's offer to appoint a member of his Civil Platform party to the post of city business ombudsman.

Sobyanin's proposal has been seen as a strategic response to 37 prominent businessmen's announcement Wednesday that they will openly support opposition candidate Alexei Navalny in the Sept. 8. mayoral election.

"Primarily Internet entrepreneurs endorsed Navalny, but for the most part businessmen prefer to keep further away from politics and don't want to damage their relationships with city authorities. For them, Mikhail Prokhorov is an iconic figure," political analyst Alexei Makarkin told Kommersant.

Prokhorov announced his party's decision to accept the unexpected offer Thursday on the television channel NTV.

Collaboration among political groups is "a sign of civilized modern politics," Prokhorov said, adding that his party "is ready to use any opportunity to help businessmen."

Prokhorov contemplated a mayoral run but declined on June 13, saying that he was unable to transparently transfer his foreign assets to Russia by election day as required by law.

Instead, Civil Platform intends to use this election to attract voter attention prior to participation in the 2014 Moscow City Duma elections, in which Prokhorov plans to run.

The billionaire proved his political capital in 2012, when 20 percent of Muscovites voted for him in the presidential election.

City Hall plans to work with other parties that aren't involved in the current election, Sobyenin's press secretary said.

Experts have said that Civil Platform is becoming the second choice political party for regional elites after reigning party United Russia.

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