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More Businesses Back Navalny

By The Moscow Times

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The number of businessmen who have openly supported mayoral candidate Alexei Navalny by signing a "social contract" with him has increased from 37 last week to 179 on Monday, according to entrepreneurs.navalny.ru, the website devoted to the initiative.

Among others, the new signatories include Sergei Turko, the editor-in-chief of the Alpina Publisher publishing house; Dmitry Mendrelyuk, the founder of the Computerra IT magazine; Alexei Nazarov of muzonshop.ru, an online store that sells music equipment; and Yevgeny Petrov of 78.auto.ru, an online auto equipment retailer.

The initiative was announced earlier this month, with entrepreneurs promising to back Navalny's mayoral bid in the Sept. 8 election in exchange for his support for the rule of law and independence of the judiciary.

Businesses have not risked openly backing opposition politicians since the jailing of former billionaire Mikhail Khodorkovsky in 2003, three years into President Vladimir Putin's first presidency.

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