

Sobyanin Will Not Participate in Tonight's Debate

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Five of six mayoral candidates are set for the campaign's first televised debate, which will be broadcast live at 9 p.m. on Moskva 24.

Acting Mayor Sergei Sobyanin refused to engage his rivals in the public debates, which run until the night before the Sept. 8 election.

"Sobyanin will not participate in the debates, focusing instead on direct interaction with the voters," Sobyanin's campaign head Lyudmila Shvetsova told Kommersant.

The five candidates in the debates are Ivan Melnikov from the Communist Party, Nikolai Levichev from "Just Russia," Mikhail Degtyarev from LDPR, Sergei Mitrokhin of Yabloko and blogger Alexei Navalny, who was nominated by RPR-Parnas.

Sobyanin's decision to skip the debates was met with sharp criticism from the other mayoral

hopefuls.

Melnikov said that a debate without Sobyenin is "not of great significance." He added that there is an opportunity for the acting mayor to participate in the second round, "if at least three of the five candidates would agree to the proposal."

Host Dmitry Shchugorev will lead off the debate by asking the candidates why they want to be mayor of Moscow. Then, the five candidates will take turns answering questions from their opponents. At the end of the debate each participant will have 30 seconds to make a closing statement.

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