

Scientists to Protest Reform at Bolotnaya Ploshchad

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Russian Academy of Sciences' labor union, outraged by the State Duma's ratification Wednesday of a law reforming the Academy, are planning a Sept. 28 protest at Bolotnaya Ploshchad, the scene of a number of major political rallies in recent years.

"We 'ordered' a meeting at Ploshchad Revolyutsii for 5,000 [protesters] on Sept. 28. They refused us and proposed Surovskaya Ploshchad. However we are asking for a meeting of 5,000, and Surovskaya Ploshchad can fit 1,500 at most," the Moscow regional chairman of the organization told RIA Novosti.

When their application for a protest at Ploshchad Revolyutsii was refused, the academics immediately submitted a second application for a meeting at Bolotnaya Ploshchad.

The controversial bill has stirred up a series of demonstrations in Moscow and beyond, including an unsanctioned meeting of 200 people outside the State Duma on Wednesday,

where two protesters were briefly detained.

The most disputed point in the bill is the transfer of the management of scientific institutions' property to a government agency, which many believe will strip the scientific community of its autonomy.

The institutions affected include the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, and the Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences, with the exception of their Far Eastern, Siberian and Ural branches.

The bill must now face review by the Federation Council, which could take place next Wednesday at the council's first fall session, said Viktor Kosourov, first deputy chairman of the council's committee on science, education, culture and information policies.

The bill's fate also hinges on the decision of President Vladimir Putin, who has previously been a proponent of the reforms.

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