The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# What the Papers Say, Dec. 25, 2013

By The Moscow Times

December 26, 2013

**Kommersant**

1. Petr Netreba and Dmitry Butrin article headlined "Punctuation marks being put in front of Union" reports on a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council that took place in the Kremlin on Dec. 24 that discussed a draft treaty on the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union; pp 1-2 (931 words).

2. Yelena Chernenko interview with U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul, headlined "All diplomats leave at some point, but I'm still here", who comments on U.S.-Russia relations and rumors of his imminent resignation; pp 1, 6 (1,278 words).

3. Yelena Gerashchenko and Khalil Aminov article called "Apartments doing well" says that sales of units in newly built apartment hotels in Moscow have doubled over the past year, but owners are not always aware of the pitfalls of owning such property; pp 1, 10 (519 words).

4. Maria Yakovleva article called "Direct savings" looks at Deputy Prime Minister Olga Golodets' idea to lift restrictions on people's right to inherit their late relatives' pension savings; pp 1, 8 (603).

5. Alexei Shapovalov article "New Year with taste of recession" summarizes the uninspiring January-October economic data published by the state statistics agency Rosstat. Industrial output is likely to drop in December as domestic consumption is slumping; p 2 (652 words).

6. Irina Nagornykh article headlined "United Russia will have to tell others about its use" gives details of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's meeting with United Russia party activists. Medvedev advised the party to try and marry the tasks of ensuring Russia's strategic development and the party's electoral interests; p 2 (547 words).

7. Anna Pushkarskaya article "Government launches the closure of Book Chamber and Radio and Television Archive" says the Russian government has tabled legislative amendments that, when passed, will create legal grounds for the closure of the Book Chamber and the Radio and Television Archive. Although the planned reorganization of the two establishments initially caused an outcry, experts say that the Television Archive will not be lost. Meanwhile, publishers and academics fear that the disbandment of the Book Chamber could create chaos in the book industry; p 2 (559 words).

8. Ivan Safronov article headlined "Roskosmos money ends up in zero gravity" says the space agency still has 30 billion rubles ($0.9 billion) to spend before the end of the year; looks at the financial technicalities of making sure that the money does not have to be returned to the government; p 3 (628 words).

9. Oleg Rubnikovich article called "APEC embezzlement reduced during investigation" says that the investigative department of the Russian Interior Ministry has reported completed an investigation into the alleged embezzlement of funds allocated for preparations for the 2012 APEC summit. It has been established that 29 million rubles, rather than 100 million rubles, was allegedly stolen; p 4 (485 words).

10. Alexei Sokovnin article "Kapotnya pogrom fails to resist amnesty" says that three suspects in the September attack on a migrants' hostel in the Kapotnya district of Moscow have been granted amnesty; p 4 (403 words).

11. Musa Muradov article headlined "Social insurance fund is visited in search of government money" reports on an investigation in connection with the suspected embezzlement of up to 1 billion rubles from the Social Insurance Fund directorate in the republic of Ingushetia; p 4 (351 words).

12. Grigory Tumanov article entitled "Yury Chaika delivers correctional information" notes that Prosecutor-General Yury Chaika has for the first time ever criticized the law on NGOs. He

was talking at a closed-door meeting with human rights advocates and admitted that "mistakes were often made" when enforcing the law; p 5 (577 words).

13. Ivan Buranov article called "Parking in circle" says the paid parking area in central Moscow has been extended as of today, details fees; p 5 (617 words).

14. Maria Yefimova article headlined "Explosion fits Muslim Brotherhood well" says the interim Egyptian government has declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization following a deadly car bomb attack in the north of Cairo. Russian expert Alexei Malashenko warns that it is too early to write off the Muslim Brotherhood as a political force as it will continue its activity underground; p 6 (412 words).

15. Olga Adamchuk article called "Minus two plus one" reports that the Central Bank has recalled the licences of two more banks and will bail out another ; pp 7-8 (650 words).

16. Yelena Chernenko and Yelizaveta Kuznetsova article headlined "'Open skies' for two" looks at implications of an "open skies" agreement to be signed by Russia and Armenia; p 7 (556 words).

17. Roman Kondratyev article entitled "Rusal short of consultations" says Oleg Deripaska's aluminium company Rusal is suing the London Metal Exchange over changes to the latter's warehouse rules. Lawyer Vasily Vasilyev says Rusal is likely to lose the case due to precedents; p 8 (708 words).

18. Anastasia Fomicheva article "Finnish nuclear power plant will cost twice as much as Russian ones" details the economics of a Russian project to build a nuclear power plant in Finland; p 9 (600 words).

## Vedomosti

1. Dina Ushakova article called "Trillions running out" says Russian banks have borrowed a record amount of $90 billion from the Central Bank through repo transactions; pp 1, 14 (429 words).

2. Maria Zheleznova et al. article headlined "Moscow without parties" reports that a decision has allegedly been made that a new City Duma will be elected in September 2014 through plurality voting in single-seat constituencies. Experts doubt it that the opposition could secure a substantial number of seats in the legislature because elections in single-seat constituencies are usually won by pro-government candidates; pp 1-2 (861 words).

3. Editorial headlined "Maidan on holiday" analyses the interim results of the standoff between the Ukrainian government and the opposition that has been occupying Kiev's Maidan

square for a month now; pp 1, 6 (428 words).

4. Polina Khimshiashvili article called "Dispute of Eurasians" reports on a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council; says the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union might be delayed as the Belarus and Kazakh presidents made it clear they were not happy with some of the provisions of the project; p 2 (317 words).

5. Anastasia Kornya and Alexei Nikolsky article "Interior Ministry colonel has been reached from U.S." says the Philips electronics giant has had to give up contracts with a company headed by a former Interior Ministry official who is featured on the so-called "Magnitsky List" of officials subjected to sanctions in the U.S., includes comments from anti-corruption campaigners; p 2 (400 words).

6. Maxim Tovkaylo article "Property without a target" reports the results of a recent check of the Federal Agency for the Management of State Property conducted by the Audit Chamber; p 4 (320 words).

7. Yelizaveta Sergina column called "Figure of the week: 150 euros" looks at a proposal by Finance Minister Anton Siluanov to levy an import duty on goods bought online abroad if the purchase price exceeds 150 euros. The idea sparked hot debates online; the authors says those lobbying for the duty want to protect Russian online shops from Western retail giants; p 7 (399 words).

8. Op-ed by Novaya Gazeta observer Andrei Kolesnikov headlined "Political economy: Operation code-named 'Tegel'" argues that true diplomacy happens backstage, and the Khodorkovsky case proves it; p 7 (431 words).

9. Vitaly Petlevoy article headlined "UC Rusal against exchange" says Oleg Deripaska's aluminium company Rusal is suing the London Metal Exchange over changes to the latter's warehouse rules that come into force in April 2014; p 11 (580 words).

10. Galina Starinskaya article called "To China via Kazakhstan" says that as of 2014, Russian oil company Rosneft will start shipping oil to China via Kazakhstan. The author calculates that a total of 22.6 million tons is to be supplied to China next year; p 12 (549 words).

11. Darya Borisyak article called "Central Bank ousts Askold" profiles Rublevsky and Askold banks that lost their licences yesterday, and Ellips Bank that is to be bailed out by the Central Bank; p 14 (688 words).

12. Mikhail Malykhin article called "Profession: Troll" studies a new job that has emerged in recent years — that of a social media marketer; p 20 (1,301 words).

**Nezavisimaya Gazeta**

1. Anastasia Bashkatova article entitled "Elvira Nabiullina's dead-end policy" looks at the immediate effects of a series of licence recalls on the banking sector; pp 1, 4 (1,042 words).

2. Viktoria Panfilova and Yury Simonyan article headlined "Minsk and Astana fearful of Moscow's diktat" looks at the reservations that Belarus and Kazakhstan apparently have about integrating with Russia and Kyrgyzstan to form the Eurasian Economic Union; pp 1, 7 (1,152 words).

3. Yekaterina Trifonova article called "Anti-corruption squads drawn from among staff" says the Labor Ministry has encouraged government agencies and private companies to establish anti-corruption teams that would watch staff to prevent corruption. Experts doubt the feasibility of the proposal; pp 1-2 (561 words).

4. Vladislav Maltsev article headlined "Church no longer hears 'punk prayer'" notes that the release of the Pussy Riot punk rock band members Maria Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova has not generated much comment from the Russian Orthodox Church; pp 1-2 (658 words).

5. Yury Roks article called "Saakashvili's team strikes back" reports on recent developments in Georgia where suspended Tbilisi Mayor Gigi Ugulava said Chief Prosecutor Otar Partskhaladze have been convicted of robbery in Germany; p 1, 7 (776 words).

6. Darya Tsilyurik article called "Snowden still employed by U.S. intelligence services" gives highlights of Edward Snowden's 14-hour-long interview with the Washington Post; pp 1, 8 (771 words).

7. Viktor Litovkin article headlined "Yars shooting from underground" reports on the first test firing of the solid fuel ballistic missile Yars; says it will be deployed in Siberia, where thick woods will make it almost impossible to detect them even with the help of satellite surveillance; p 2 (702 words).

8. Editorial headlined "Apartment revolution" says the Defense Ministry's plan to offer housing subsidies to retired officers who are entitled to state-provided flats has already been lauded as an "apartment revolution", but might stumble because of too high property prices; p 2 (563 words).

9. Ivan Rodin article called "Communists call for pre-election referendums" says the Community Party wants to have the procedure of holding local referendums to be streamlined. Experts believe the party hopes to use referendums as a campaigning opportunity to gather support ahead of elections; p 3 (701 words).

10. Alexei Tuzov column entitled "Carte Blanche: Are migrant workers holding back economic growth?" says the number of migrant workers among public transportation and truck drivers in Russia is growing, but they are not the only ones to blame for road accidents as worn out roads and corruption are bigger culprits; p 3 (867 words).

11. Savely Vezhin interview with Irkutsk region governor Sergei Yeroshchenko, headlined "Irkutsk region decides on priority projects"; p 5 (2,626 words).

12. Sergei Konovalov article called "All-Russia Front getting rid of regional armed groups" reports on an All-Russia People's Front campaign against Chelyabinsk region governor Mikhail Yurevich, who has been spending an average of $2 million in public funds on bodyguards; p 6 (720 words)

13. Yevgenia Novikova article headlined "Afghanistan trying to blackmail America with Russia's help" says the speaker of the lower chamber of Afghanistan's parliament has suggested that the CSTO member states could focus on ensuring security within Afghanistan rather than on their borders with the country. Pundit Fedor Lukyanov says Russia will not send troops to Afghanistan no matter what, and adds that the statement was probably intended as "blackmail" against the U.S.; p 8 (718 words).

14. AK47 inventor Mikhail Kalashnikov obituary by Rostekh state corporation CEO Sergei Chemezov; p 16 (211 words).

**Rossiiskaya Gazeta**

1. Timofey Borisov interview with Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov, under the headline "Signal 2014", who gives his forecast for natural disasters in 2014; pp 1, 3 (1,304 words).

2. Kira Latukhina article called "Three plus two" gives a factual account of a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council that was attended by the Russian, Kazakh and Belarusian presidents, later joined by their Armenian and Kyrgyz counterparts; p 2 (643 words).

3. Fedor Lukyanov op-ed entitled "Year of negotiability" says the year 2013 will make history because, despite turmoil, breakthroughs were achieved in the Iranian and Syrian conflicts; p 3 (677 words).

4. Ivan Yegorov article "Minus 12 terrorist attacks and 320 bombs" gives details of a session of the National Antiterrorism Committee summing up 2013 results; p 5 (400 words).

5. Mikhail Falaleyev piece headlined "Secrets without disclosure" details amendments to two federal laws that make information on people who are under special state protection

from criminals and terrorists a state secret, with the amendments themselves printed on p 19; p 5 (350 words).

6. Op-ed by Igor Ivanov, president of the Russian Council for International Affairs, called "Time for dialogue" sums up the results of Russian foreign policy in 2013; p 6 (1,175 words).

7 Sergei Ptichkin article called "Hundred million Kalashnikovs" pays tribute to Mikhail Kalashnikov, "legendary" designer of the AK-47 assault rifle; p 6 (1,191 words).

**Izvestia**

1. Yelena Teslova article headlined "Presidential human rights council proposes investigating incidents of violence in Ukraine" gives details of a statement from the Russian presidential human rights council calling for an international probe into use of violence during recent protests in Ukraine; pp 1-2 (350 words).

2. Dmitry Yevstifeyev article "'Brothers' Circle' complains to ambassador and U.S. Treasury" gives details of a letter Russian lawyer Vadim Lyalin, who is suspected by the U.S. authorities of links to the "Brothers' Circle" maffia group, has written to U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul and the U.S. Department of Treasury insisting that the accusations against him are unfounded; pp 1, 5 (600 words).

3. Taras Podrez piece headlined "Website of Navalny's foundation registered in U.S. citizen's name" says the website of opposition figure Alexei Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption used to belong to a U.S. citizen, who has now asked the foundation to change details of the Internet domain fbk.info that still list her; p 2 (300 words).

4. Sergei Podosenov article "Experts identify main threat to Olympics" gives details of a report released by Alexei Mukhin's Political Information Centre on "levels of security and risks" associated with the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi; p 4 (1,200 words).

5. Andrei Gridasov report "Defendant in 'Politkovskaya case' accused of putting pressure on witnesses" says Sergei Khadzhikurbanov, who is standing trial on suspicion of killing Novaya Gazeta journalist Anna Politkovskaya, has been moved to a high-security unit of the Matrosskaya Tishina remand prison. His lawyer links it to suspicions that Khadzhikurbanov may be putting pressure on a key witness in the case; p 5 (500 words).

6. Maria Gorkovskaya article "Membership of Muslim Brotherhood will be punishable" looks at recent developments in Egypt and interviews Russian experts on the region; p 7 (500 words).

7. Op-ed by journalist Maxim Kononeko headlined "Russia Riot" looks at the controversy sparked by punk band Pussy Riot's stunt at Christ the Saviour Cathedral and its aftermath now that the two members of the band who were sent to prison for it have been released; p 9 (900 words).

## Moskovsky Komsomolets

1. Commentary piece by Yulia Kalinina headlined "Snowden is a cat, we are in a mousetrap" analyses Edward Snowden's interview for The Washington Post and his role in history; pp 1-2 (350 words).

2. Yelena Yegorova article "New union being prepared for Ukraine" gives details of a session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council that was held in the Kremlin on Dec. 24 ; p 2 (350 words).

3. Dmitry Katorzhnov piece headlined "Manezhnaya the other way round" reports plans of the organizers of a large-scale rally against islamophobia that is expected to be staged in Moscow in late January; p 2 (200 words).

4. Alexander Minkin latest in the "Letters to president" series, headlined "Worshipful Sir", looks at Putin's decision to pardon former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky; pp 1, 4 (450 words).

## Novaya Gazeta

1. Roman Anin article headlined "Gazprom — offshore wealth" says Novaya Gazeta has studied Gazprom's contracts on buying gas equipment and revealed fresh examples of "strange" deals and payments to shady offshore entities; pp 1-3 (1,700 words).

2. Boris Bornshteyn article headlined "Kalashnikov: Man and riffle" is an obituary for the designer of AK-47 assault rifle, Mikhail Kalashnikov; p 4 (300 words).

3. Alexei Tarasov article headlined "Ritual humiliation" reports on the release from prisons of two members of the Pussy Riot feminist punk band; p 7 (500 words).

4. Yelena Kostyuchenko article headlined "Maria Alyokhina: I did everything I wanted in the colony" is an interview with the released Pussy Riot member, Maria Alyokhina; pp 8-9 (1,400 words).

5. Yelena Kostyuchenko article headlined "Nadezhda Tolokonnikova: I will work with the hell's past" is an interview with a released Pussy Riot member, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova; p 9 (400 words).

6. Andrei Kolesnikov article headlined "Ten years with right to correspondence" says Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the pardoned former oil tycoon and critic of President Vladimir Putin who is staying abroad now, is a citizen of the world, not a political refugee; p 10 (400 words).

7. Dmitry Dokuchayev article headlined "Year of fulfilled forecasts" says the poor economic forecast for the Russian economy came true this year; p 11 (600 words).

8. Andrei Sukhotin article headlined "Who spins Vikhr" says deliveries of Vikhr-1 guided missiles have been disrupted and the Defense Ministry has lost about 2 billion rubles (about 61.3m $); p 12 (1,000 words).

9. Natalia Zotova article headlined "We were granted amnesty, the Arctic was not" says Greenpeace members, who were arrested for a protest against a Russian oil rig, are going home; p 16 (1,000 words).

**Noviye Izvestia**

1. Artem Lunkov article headlined "Chambers of reason" says the Federal Assembly has virtually lost its main functions since its foundation 20 years ago; pp 1-2 (1,300 words).

2. Sergei Putilov article headlined "I created it to protect motherland" contains a Russian expert comment on AK-47 assault rifles; p 3 (400 words).

**Trud**

1. Yevgeny Akatov article headlined "What claims against WTO?" features expert comments on Russia's relations with the World Trade Organization; p 3 (400 words).

Krasnaya Zvezda

1. Unattributed article headlined "In memory of Kalashnikov" is an obituary for the designer of AK-47 assault riffle, Mikhail Kalashnikov; p 1 (200 words).

**Tvoi Den**

1. Unattributed piece headlined "Special aircraft for oligarch" reveals details of the aircraft that on Dec. 20 took former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky from prison in Karelia, where he was serving his term, to St. Petersburg after President Putin signed the decree to pardon him; p 2 (200 words).

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/26/what-the-papers-say-dec-25-2013-a30795