

Long-Standing Editor Re-Elected at Ekho Moskvyy

By [Anna Dolgov](#)

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Journalists from the opposition-minded Ekho Moskvyy radio station have re-elected their long-standing editor Alexei Venediktov to the post, though his position still needs to be approved by Kremlin allies who control the board of directors.

Venediktov, who has worked for the station since it was founded in 1990, received 72 votes for his re-election, with four other journalists voting against him and three more abstaining, Ekho Moskvyy reported.

According to Ekho's charter, its journalists get to elect their chief editor, and Venediktov, who has held the job since 1998, was the only candidate to run in the ballot.

In an allusion to Russian elections that some critics see as rigged, Venediktov said in a Twitter message that his results — 91 percent of votes cast — were better than those of President Vladimir Putin, but fell behind those of Chechnya's leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

Based on the radio station's charter, his re-election still needs to be approved by the board of directors, which is controlled by officials from Gazprom Media, a subsidiary of the state-run oil giant.

Gazprom Media said recently that a shareholders meeting has dismissed Ekho Mosvky's CEO Yury Fedutinov, who had managed the radio station since 1992, to appoint the wife of a Kremlin PR aide to the job.

Venediktov said that if the board fails to approve his reappointment by March 17, when his current contract expires, he will remain at the radio station as a political commentator, Interfax reported.

"I am staying at Ekho, I am an Ekho shareholder, I am a member of the board of directors, I am not going anywhere," Venediktov said.

If his re-election is approved, he will continue as the radio station's independent editorial policy, Itar-Tass reported.

"This is a platform for discussions, a platform for opinions, this is an opportunity for journalists to work professionally," Venediktov said.

Under Venediktov, Ekho Moskvyy has emerged one of the leading independent media voices in Russia.

Contact the author at newsreporter@imedia.ru

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