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Ponomaryov Withdraws From Novosibirsk Mayoral Election

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State Duma deputy Ilya Ponomaryov and five other opposition candidates have withdrawn from the Novosibirsk mayoral election, leaving the coast clear for Communist Party candidate Anatoly Lokot to challenge the ruling United Russia party unhindered.

In January, opposition parties signed an agreement stating that they would focus on increasing voter turnout, stop belittling each other, and unite around the strongest candidate ahead of the election, which takes place on April 6.

The opposition parties have also agreed to share the same campaign headquarters.

Ponomaryov, the only Duma deputy to vote against Russia's annexation of Crimea, said that the formalities relating to the headquarters will be completed by March 31, Interfax reported Friday.

The election was called after Mayor Vladimir Gorodetsky left his post to become the region's

deputy governor earlier this year.

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