

Professor Appointed Donetsk Republic Minister Without Knowing

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The republic's health minister, Konstantin Scherbakov.

When the self-styled People's Republic of Donetsk appointed a full Cabinet of ministers, it appears to have neglected to notify at least one of its top officials that he got the job.

The republic's health minister, Konstantin Scherbakov, said a friend phoned him at his workplace — a local medical university — to say he had been named as a member of the world's newest government, Ukraine's TSN television reported Wednesday.

"It was a complete, absolute surprise for me," Scherbakov told TSN. "I started inquiring, because I was still at work, where that information was coming from. First, I was told that it was the Internet, then that it was from some news report. And after getting home I really did find that information, that list, on the Internet."

The newly appointed minister said he had no intention of taking the job, Ukraine's Korrespondent.net reported.

"I never agreed to this, I never signed any papers, it was a complete surprise," Korrespondent.net quoted him as saying. "I am working at our medical university, I have things to do, so I am doing my job and I never had any intention to change my plans."

After holding a separatist referendum on March 11 and appealing to Russia to incorporate the new self-styled state, the "People's Republic" took a stab at self-rule and reportedly released a list of its full Cabinet of ministers last week.

At more than two dozen people, the number of Cabinet members is more than twice the number of floors in the Soviet-era building that is occupied by the smallest self-styled state.

It remained unclear how many ministers planned to show up for their new jobs. Fuel and Energy Minister Oleksei Hranovsky said on his Facebook page on Tuesday that he had quit the job after a disagreement with the new country's leadership over its plans to nationalize local businesses, Korrespondent.net reported.

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