

# Former Oil Tycoon Khodorkovsky Plans Charity Projects in Ukraine

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**The  Moscow Times**

Former Yukos CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky's charity Open Russia, which was shut down shortly after his imprisonment, is set to relaunch with projects in Ukraine.

While details of the organization's new structure and specific projects will be released only in the fall, Gazeta.ru has reported that several figures who were involved in the work of the original charity are planning to return.

Olga Pispanen, press secretary for Khodorkovsky, told Gazeta.ru on Tuesday that the organization would be back in business in the fall, and that Khodorkovsky would once again be at the helm.

Khodorkovsky reportedly plans to spend the summer negotiating with other figures he would like to invite on board.

It was unclear where the organization would be registered, however, since Khodorkovsky still has a legal claim pending against him in connection with the Yukos case.

"How can we open the organization here, considering the lawsuit [for 17 billion rubles] still open that prevents Mikhail Khodorkovsky from returning to Russia for fear of not being let out again?" Pismanen said in comments to Gazeta.ru.

The lawsuit stems from taxes that authorities say Yukos evaded. Pismanen told Gazeta.ru that it was possible Khodorkovsky would simply choose to register the organization overseas.

Irina Yasina, the former head of Open Russia, also told Gazeta.ru that she'd be willing to work with the charity again.

"Yes, I will be doing a bit of that, but not on a large-scale. I'll most likely become an adviser to Khodorkovsky, a sort of onlooker," Yasina said.

Khodorkovsky has already made clear his desire to work on projects in Ukraine, having organized a forum in Kiev in April called "Ukraine-Russia: Dialogue" that was meant to focus on finding a way out of the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

"Open Russia," a nongovernmental organization promoting freedom and democracy, was established in 2001. The organization funded various philanthropic projects and educational projects for young people before being shut down in 2006.

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