

Opposition Leader Navalny Ready to Work with Khodorkovsky

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Navalny, 38, spearheaded record protests in Moscow against alleged fraud in the last Duma elections and presidential vote.

One of Russia's most popular opposition activists said Thursday that he was ready to join forces with former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky in future parliamentary elections.

"We definitely see him as an ally," Alexei Navalny, who is under house arrest, was cited by Interfax as saying through an aide.

"We find his calls for a broad collaboration of all forces standing for [Russia's] path to European development very appealing," Navalny said.

Navalny said he and Khodorkovsky had no set plans for a possible joint effort in the 2016 State Duma elections.

"But we will be glad if there's any opportunity for real collaboration," he said.

Khodorkovsky, 51, spent 10 years imprisoned in Russia on economic charges he believed were fabricated in a pre-emptive bid to keep him from posing a political challenge to President Vladimir Putin.

The businessman, who was unexpectedly amnestied last year and now resides in Switzerland, on Wednesday said he would offer "organizational help" to opposition forces in the upcoming vote. He said he was not offering financial support, however, because the state would likely seize his donations.

Recent legislation prohibits both Khodorkovsky and Navalny — a convict in an unrelated criminal case he also said was fabricated for political reasons — from running for office themselves. But both men have vowed to find other ways to play a role in Russia's political life.

Navalny's Party of Progress recently suffered a setback, however, when it was repeatedly denied official registration on technicalities, preventing it from making to the ballots.

Navalny, 38, spearheaded record protests in Moscow against alleged fraud in the last Duma elections and presidential vote. He ran for Moscow mayor last year and secured 27 percent of the votes.

While some opposition activists may feel a boost of morale from Khodorkovsky's words, Russia's liberal opposition is still far from presenting a unified front in the 2016 race: The prominent party Yabloko has rejected his offer, Interfax reported.

Yabloko is against oligarchic capitalism, said Sergei Mitrokhin, the leader of the party, which is known for its aversion to political alliances.

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