

Depardieu Declines to Run for Governor of Siberian Region

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Russian opposition party RPR-Parnas failed to persuade French actor and Russian citizen Gerard Depardieu to run for the post of governor in the Siberian region of Omsk, his artistic director said on Tuesday.

"Depardieu knows nothing about any offer. Of course he will not participate. He works in the film industry — he is an actor, not a politician," said Arnaud Frilley, as reported by Russian News Service.

The Omsk regional branch of the anti-Kremlin party proposed the outspoken French actor for the post of governor simply to draw attention to the defects of the Russian electoral system, the branch's head Igor Basov told Interfax on Tuesday.

"We thought that this way we can highlight the absurd situation when parliamentary parties adjust electoral legislation for their own advantage, depriving others of the right to run

for office and get elected," he said.

Direct elections of Russian governors were reintroduced in 2012 following mass anti-government protests in Moscow and other Russian cities. Under the new electoral procedure, would-be candidates have to collect signatures from up to 10 percent of local municipal deputies to get nominated. Critics of the new procedure say it prohibits independent candidates from running for office.

Depardieu made the headlines in Russia and around the world when President Vladimir Putin granted him Russian citizenship at the beginning of 2013. He has been a vocal proponent of Putin and his policies.

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