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Chairman Churov Removed From Russian Central Election Commission

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Head of Russia's Central Elections Commission Vladimir Churov

Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved a new list of the Central Election Commission (CEC) members which did not include the commission's current chairman Vladimir Churov, the RBC news agency reported Thursday.

The decree was posted Thursday by the Kremlin press service and appointed five members — Alexander Kanev, Vasily Likhachev, Ella Pamfilova, Yevgeny Shevchenko, Boris Ebzeev — to the commission.

Churov's position will most likely be given to human rights ombudswoman Ella Pamfilova, according to several unidentified sources of the TASS news agency, RBC reported.

"The new list of CEC members must be trustworthy, according to plans of the 'architects,' and there is no such trust in Churov anymore," co-chairman of elections watchdog Golos Grigory Melkonyants said in a statement posted on the Open Russia website.

"Many were surprised to see Pamfilova on the presidential list," he said. Pamfilova has been active, engaged in serious reform and has accomplished a great deal while in her post — "most human rights activists had hoped that she would continue to work in her position. There was no sign that she would become a new member of CEC," Melkoyants added.

In December 2015, Churov told RBC that he was not sure if he would stay at CEC. He also refused to comment on the new list, saying that "presidential orders are not to be discussed," TASS reported.

Vladimir Churov was elected as a chairman of CEC in 2007, and was re-elected for a second term in 2011. His current term expires on March 27, Interfax reported.

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