

No Televised Debates for Moscow Duma Candidates

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Moscow candidates in this September's State Duma elections will not take part in televised debates, the Moscow City Electoral Commission announced Thursday.

Debates are only obligatory under Russian law if each candidate receives over five minutes of allotted broadcasting time.

The state-controlled Moscow Media group is devoting 300 minutes on their channels to candidate's election broadcasts, or 100 seconds to each of the 180 candidates.

Candidates will instead be given the chance to create a 25 second long video which will be

shown four times on local television channels Moskva 24 and Doveriye.

Several opposition candidates condemned the decision, with A Just Russia party's Kristina Simonyan calling it “a sham.”

PARNAS candidate Nikolai Lyaskin alleged that the decision would benefit Vladimir Putin's ruling United Russia party, claiming that United Russia candidates are “terrified of direct dialogue, especially when it’s televised.”

State Duma elections take place on Sep. 18 using a mixed voting system. Some 225 deputies will be elected from party lists, while 225 will be elected from single member voting districts, 15 of which are in Moscow.

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