

Sobchak Announces New Political Party 'For Change'

March 15, 2018



Maxim Shemetov / Reuters

Opposition politician Ksenia Sobchak has announced the creation of a new political party on the eve of Russia's presidential elections together with ex-Duma deputy Dmitri Gudkov.

Presidential candidate Sobchak is expected to win less than 2 percent of the vote in elections scheduled for Sunday, [according](#) to the latest state-run polls. The former reality television star is said to enjoy the backing of members of Russia's liberal elite but holds the highest "negative rating" of any candidate.

Related article: [What's Behind Ksenia Sobchak's 'Against All' Bid for the Presidency?](#)

Sobchak announced that the goal of the new party would be to "return our freedom and your freedom," the RBC business portal [reported](#) on Thursday.

Citing a source in the Sobchak campaign, the Vedomosti business daily [reported](#) that the new party would be “based on” the structure the Civic Initiative political party, which nominated Sobchak as a presidential candidate.

Former tycoon turned opposition politician Mikhail Khodorkovsky has reportedly given his blessing to the new party, Nezavisimaya Gazeta [said](#).

Citing the chairman of Khodorkovsky's Open Russia movement, Alexander Solovyov, Nezavisimaya attributed the oligarch's support to his understanding that Kremlin elites opposed to further antagonism with the West will “inevitably” lend their support to Sobchak.

The independent mayor of Russia’s fourth-biggest city of Yekaterinburg, Yevgeny Roizman, could assume a leadership post in the new party, along with Solovyov, according to the newspaper.

“It’s difficult to predict how the authorities will react to the creation of a new party. It’s unclear what picture they now have in their minds,” it cited Solovyov as saying.

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