

Sobchak Announces New Political Party 'For Change'

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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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