



**Parliamentary Elections
18 September 2016
Russian Federation**

**REGISTRATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES FOR
THE 2016 ELECTION TO THE STATE DUMA OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

SUMMARY

74 parties had the formal right to nominate candidates for the election of deputies to the State Duma in 2016.

However, only one-third of those parties attempted to take part in the 2016 State Duma elections because the Russian electoral system combines excessive demands on the number of signatures necessary for candidate registration with extremely rigid requirements for their inspection.

As a result, out of parties without registration exemption, only the following nominated their candidates to the State Duma of the Russian Federation:

1. "Union of Labor"
2. "Native Party"
3. "Revival of Agrarian Russia" (only district candidates)
4. "Revival of the Villages" (only district candidates)
5. "Party of the Parents of the Future" (only district candidates)
6. "Will"
7. "Great Fatherland"
8. "Party of Social Reform"

However, all 14 parties with registration exemption nominated their candidates:

1. "United Russia"
2. Communist Party
3. Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)
4. "Just Russia"
5. Russian United Democratic Party "Yabloko"
6. "Civic Platform"
7. "Civilian Power" (a possible merger with the Communist Party of Social Justice (CPSJ) and a change of name to CPSJ was announced but did not occur)
8. Communist Party "Communists of Russia"
9. People's Freedom Party ("PARNAS")
10. "Patriots of Russia"

11. "Party of Growth" (formerly called "Right Cause")
12. "Rodina"
13. "Russian Party of Pensioners for Justice"
14. Russian Ecological Party "The Greens"

As a result, the number of parties participating in the nomination stage in these elections was lower than in the State Duma elections of 1993, 1995, 1999, and 2003, but higher than in the elections of 2007 and 2011.

Moreover, after the initial candidate list validation, the number of participating parties went down, and the number will most likely further decrease after the end of the registration process.

August 3 is the deadline for political parties to submit signatures to the Central Election Commission (CEC); the Commission then has 10 days to make a decision on whether or not to register the party.

Almost all parties that do not participate in the elections thus doom themselves to liquidation in 2019-2020.

Therefore, for the majority of parties, participation in the upcoming elections to the State Duma is the most viable opportunity to save their parties.

I. PROBLEMS FACING PARTIES DURING THE NOMINATION OF FEDERAL CANDIDATE LISTS

1. Number of signatures collected. The law requires that parties collect at least 200,000 signatures, with no single region of the Russian Federation providing more than 7,000. This entails collecting signatures in at least 29 regions. The number of submitted signatures may exceed the minimum required number of 200,000 by not more than 5%.

2. Quality requirements for signature sheets. In 2003, the acceptable percentage of rejected (spoilt) signatures was 25%. In 2005, this figure was sharply reduced to 5%. The maximum number of signatures over the required limit was similarly reduced from 25% to 5%.

3. Requirement to notarize data on signature collectors and their signatures. Until 2005, legislation did not contain such a requirement. Now, it imposes an additional financial burden on political parties and increases the time needed to collect signatures and submit signature sheets.

4. Season of signature collection. All the previous State Duma elections took place in December, and consequently the signature collection happened in September-October, when it is generally not yet cold and most of the voters are domiciled at their place of residence. Because the 2016 elections are taking place in September, signature collection had to occur in July, when a significant part of the electorate is not staying at their permanent residence address (TN: many Russian citizens have summer houses where they spend most of the summer months).

The Presidential Decree of June 17, 2016, scheduled the 2016 elections only 92 days before Election Day. Had the President announced the elections at the earliest legally possible moment, on May 30, parties with no registration exemption would have had 66 instead of the current 26 days to collect signatures. This means a loss of 44 days for party registration.

It is important to list the factors that have increased the time required to prepare candidate registration lists:

1. Increased number of documents to be submitted for each nominated candidate.
2. Introduction of a required minimum number of candidates on the list. This is a new separate rule for the State Duma elections.

The current law requires parties to list at least 200 candidates. This requirement is absolutely excessive: during four campaigns conducted under a mixed system, no party received more than 120 seats, and no party that won second place ever got more than 64 seats. Moreover, there are several "small" parties aiming only to overcome the 5% barrier, which is extremely far away from 200 seats.

Thus, especially for novice parties, the vast number of documents that must be submitted for each candidate and the excessive requirement of the minimum number of candidates on the list significantly increase the time needed to prepare the documents for candidate list validation.

II. CANDIDATE NOMINATION IN SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS

All single-member district candidates can be divided into the following categories:

- Candidates from political parties with registration exemption – these candidates do not have to collect voter signatures;
- Candidates from political parties that do not have an exemption – these candidates have to collect signatures;
- Self-nominated candidates – they candidates also have to collect signatures.

In single-member districts, candidates of parties without registration exemption as well as self-nominees have to collect signatures of at least 3% of the district's voters. In most districts that amounts to 13,000-15,000 signatures.

The inadequately inflated requirement of collecting signatures from 3% of district voters is the most stringent requirement for candidate registration through signature collection in the country's recent history. Until now the requirement was only 1%.

The requirement of collecting signatures of 3% of voters is a restrictive measure for candidates from political parties that do not have an exemption as well as for self-nominated candidates. Such a situation turns candidate registration into a manually controlled "political decision".

There are currently 2,188 single-member candidates on the certified list, but only 57 of them are from political parties that do not have an exemption.

According to the CEC, 304 candidates have conducted self-nomination. Therefore, as of July 29, there were 2,418 single-member candidates on the certified list. It is interesting to compare this data with data from previous elections. We see a sharp decline in the number of self-nominated candidates compared to the elections of 1999 and 2003, which is not surprising as these candidates are currently in a highly unfavorable position compared to candidates from parties with exemptions.

III. FEATURES OF NOMINATION AND COMPOSITION OF INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL PARTY LISTS

1. Party list continuity

It is interesting to compare party list composition today and five years ago for the 7 parties that also participated in the elections to the State Duma in 2011. For simplicity and clarity, we will compare mainly the central part of the list. The lists of the Communist Party and the Liberal Democratic Party display the greatest continuity. There is much less continuity in the lists of "Patriots of Russia", RUDP "Yabloko," and "Just Russia".

This time the "Just Russia" party has nominated only one candidate, S. M. Mironov, who is on both lists. He was the head of the party list in 2011.

It is more difficult to evaluate the continuity of the "United Russia" list; during both elections there was just one candidate in the central part of the list – Dmitry Medvedev

There is no evident continuity between now and 2011 in the lists of the "Right Cause" party and the "Party of Growth" (renamed "Right Cause"). Not a single candidate from the central part of the list of the "Right Cause" (10 people) is on the "Party of Growth" list.

On the other hand, the list of the "Party of Growth" includes candidates that were on the lists of the "Union of Right Forces" (Nechayev, Khakamada, Nadezhdin, Ginzburg, Pohmelkin, and Solskiy); "Yabloko" (Resnick); and "Civilian Power" (Fedulov and Pohmelkin); as well as two deputies of the State Duma of the first convocation (Stankevich and Starikov) and one from "Civic Platform" (Sidnev).

There are 10 candidates in the central part of the "Rodina" party list. None of them was on the 2003 list.

In the central part of the list of the PARNAS party, there are some candidates from the 2007 "Union of Right Forces" list (Schneider and Kataev).

From the other six parties it is interesting to look at the "Civic Platform": its list leader Shaikhutdinov was elected to the State Duma on the LDPR list in 2007.

2. "United Russia"

Just as in the past and contrary to its public statements, the party continues to apply the "electoral locomotive" strategy (adding popular persons as candidates to the party list who

serve as campaign supporters but do not necessarily aim to be elected, i.e. due to the fact that they occupy high profile posts), although less so than during the elections of 2003-2011.

The party list includes 19 heads of regions — 9 governors and 10 heads of republics.

Only 162 current State Duma deputies from "United Russia" (out of the total 238) were included in the party lists or are running in single-member districts.

Given that not all of them will be elected, at least a third of the current deputies will probably not get into the next Duma.

3. Communist Party

The CEC validated the Communist Party's list of 391 people.

The list of the Communist Party for the 2016 elections shows a high degree of continuity (very few new names) with the list from the 2011 elections.

As usual, the chairman of the Communist Party, Gennady Zyuganov, is on the top of the list. However, 12 out of the 92 current deputies are not on the list.

Business representatives on the list are mostly the current deputies (Nekrasov, Gavrilov, Kumin, Abalakov, Russki, etc.). Traditionally, the party is associated with the military complex (Dorohin, Komoedov, etc.) and agricultural and industrial lobbies.

Among the leaders are Novosibirsk Mayor Anatoly Lokot and Irkutsk Region Governor Sergey Levchenko. Oryol Governor Vadim Potomskiy is not listed.

4. "Just Russia"

Compared to 2011, the political situation as well as the party and its positioning have changed substantially. In the 2011 campaign, the party rhetoric largely coincided with the rhetoric of the opposition, and the party list was perceived as democratic and moderately liberal, largely due to the presence of such candidates as Gennady Gudkov, Dmitry Gudkov, Ilya Ponomarev, Valery Zubov, Sergei Petrov, Andrey Ozerov, and several others. However, after 2012 the position of the party leadership significantly shifted towards a conservative-nationalist ideology. Members of the party were the authors and co-authors of a number of legislative initiatives aimed against the very same groups of voters who supported the party in 2011 (restriction of the freedom of information, NGO rights, personal freedoms, and so on). Moreover, key politicians from the democratic wing left the party, including Gennady and Dmitry Gudkov, and Oksana Dmitrieva and her group.

Out of the current 64 deputies who are formally members of the party's Duma faction, the party is nominating only 47 people for re-election.

The presence of a number of business representatives (including from banking) previously not involved in politics and a number of representatives of North Caucasian business groups is noteworthy.

5. LDPR

According to official sources, the party has almost 300,000 members and 3,000 local offices; there are 54 deputies in the party's State Duma faction; it has 3 members in the Federation Council; and there are 215 LDPR deputies in 74 regional legislative assemblies.

There are 313 candidates on LDPR's 2016 list. On top of the list, as usual, is Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The federal part of the list has 10 candidates. In addition to Zhirinovskiy, it includes his son, Vice-Speaker of the State Duma Igor Lebedev (№2).

20 out of 54 current deputies from the party are neither on the federal list nor in the single-member district list for the 2016 election.

The candidates from LDPR are mostly coordinators of its regional and local offices, representatives of various small and medium-sized businesses, representatives of sports and security organizations, party members in local councils and regional parliaments, and a variety of business managers.

6. RUDP "Yabloko"

Formally, for this election "Yabloko" offered to non-partisan candidates and small parties the option of joining a broad coalition and taking advantage of the party's resources, including the exemption from the procedure of collecting signatures.

However, this offer came with a number of conditions. Potential candidates had to sign a "Memorandum of political alternative"; compliance with this party document is a prerequisite for the nomination from "Yabloko." The second condition was public support of Yabloko's head, Yavlinsky, as presidential candidate.

The 2016 list thus reflects a compromise between the party's traditional reliance on its core activists and long-time supporters, and the desire to get out of its usual „electoral ghetto” by bringing into leadership roles candidates who are new to voters.

As a result, the party's nationwide list is headed by its de facto leader, chairman of the Federal Political Committee of the party, Grigory Yavlinsky. In second place is the new chairman of the party, deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Karelia, Emilia Slabunova. In third place is a former State Duma deputy, Vladimir Ryzhkov.

Closing the party's top ten is current State Duma deputy Dmitry Gudkov. From the federal part of the 2011 list only Yavlinsky and Mitrokhin remain in 2016.

As of July 18, 306 candidates on the list have been validated by the Central Electoral Commission.

According to the party, almost one-third of the candidates (27%) are either non-partisan politicians or representatives of political parties and organizations forming the "Coalition of Political Alternatives".

On July 18, the CEC validated the party's candidate list for the single-member districts, comprising 175 individuals.

It is obvious that the vast majority of single-member district party candidates in most of the districts have very low chances of success and can use the campaign solely to raise their personal profile as well as the overall results for the federal party list.

Among those who do have a chance are Dmitry Gudkov (Tushino district №206) and Vladimir Ryzhkov (Barnaul district №39).

Other noteworthy figures are Leo Shlosberg (Pskov district №148) and deputy of the Supreme Council of Khakassia Oleg Ivanov (Khakassia constituency №35).

7. "Patriots of Russia"

As of July 14, the CEC has validated 380 individuals on party's list.

The federal part of the list has the maximum 10 candidates allowed. On top of the list is the unchanged Party Chairman Gennady Semigin, followed by the Chairman of the party's executive committee, former State Duma deputy Nadezhda Korneeva. Closing the top three is the former vice-president of Russia and former governor of the Kursk region Alexander Rutskoi.

In recent years the party achieved its strongest results in regional and local elections in North Ossetia, Dagestan, Kalmykia, the Chechen Republic, the Republic of Altai, Karachay-Cherkessia, Udmurtia, and the Krasnoyarsk Territory. In the past the party also achieved election success in Khakassia, the Orenburg Region, the Yaroslavl Region, and the Kamchatka Region.

8. "Party of Growth" (former "Right Cause")

"Party of Growth" is the new name of the "Right Cause" party, created in late 2008 to replace the dissolved "Democratic Party of Russia", the "Union of Right Forces", and the "Civil Force" parties.

According to the CEC decision of July 18, the Commission validated a list of 339 party candidates. The list includes a number of State Duma deputies from "United Russia" (N. Burykina, V. Zvagelsky, M. Slipenchuk, and B. Reznik) and "Just Russia" (O. Dmitrieva, I. Grachev, A. Krutov, and N. Petukhov).

The first three politicians on the list are Boris Titov, Oksana Dmitrieva, and General Director of LLC "Management Development Group" Dmitry Potapenko.

9. People's Freedom Party ("PARNAS")

Intense conflicts accompanied preparations for the party congress and continued after the collapse of the democratic coalition and the de-facto thwarted primaries.

The federal part of the list includes only three candidates: party chairman Mikhail Kasyanov, Vladimir Maltsev (temporarily unemployed), and A. Zubov, a columnist for the "Novaya Gazeta" publishing house.

The total number of candidates on the extended list is 315, of which 175 are members of the party. The remaining 140 candidates are members of unregistered parties—Progress Party, the Party "December 5", and the Libertarian Party—and candidates not affiliated with parties.

On July 15, the CEC validated the party list of 283 candidates.

A July 16 resolution by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation validated a list of 109 candidates in the single-mandate districts, the most prominent among whom is Professor Andrei Zubov from the Central District of Moscow №208. N. Lyaskin is running in Babushkinsky district №196, K. Yankauskas in Cheremushkinskiy district №209, and A. Pivovarov in the North-East district №214.

10. "Rodina"

A July 18 resolution by the Central Election Commission validated a list of 287 "Rodina" candidates. First on the list is the party chairman, State Duma deputy Alexey Zhuravlev.

There is a large number of small business owners, business managers, and employees of various nationalist-oriented media on the list.

On July 18 the CEC validated a party list for single-member districts of 177 candidates. Party leader A. Zhuravlev has the highest chance of being elected; he has no competition from "United Russia" in his Anninsky district №89.

11. Communist party "Communists of Russia"

Founded in June 2012, "Communists of Russia" plays a dual role in elections. As a rule, it acts as a "spoiler" for the Communist Party, taking the votes of „communist-oriented” voters. It often nominates candidates in the regions to which they do not have a (personal or political) connection. **However, in many cases, it acts as a real, independent political player with serious claims to parliamentary seats.** This occurs when regional politicians with political capital join the party, usually after leaving the Communist Party for various reasons.

The party list was validated by the CEC on July 11 and consists of 397 candidates.

Among the leaders on the list are the former governor of the Ivanovo Region Vladimir Tikhonov (№2 Group №60 - Ivanovo region; and Denis Brazauskas, member of the Supreme Council of Khakassia and the first secretary of the Khakassia republican committee.

12. Russian Ecological Party "The Greens"

The party list was validated by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation on July 16 and includes 356 candidates. The federal part of the list consists of four candidates.

For single-member districts, the CEC on July 16 validated a list of 151 party candidates. Out of all of them the greatest chances of being elected has Oleg Mitvol in Medvedkovo district №200.

13. "Civilian Power"

The new chairman is a political unknown, a 32-year-old lawyer named Kirill Bykanin.

On the list, certified by the CEC of the Russian Federation on July 19, are 227 candidates. Most of the candidates were born in the 1980s and 1990s. For single-mandate districts, the CEC validated a list of 37 people.

In Barnaul district №39, where "Yabloko" nominated Vladimir Ryzhkov, the party "Civilian Power" has put forward his namesake, Sergey Viktorovich Ryzhkov, as their candidate.

In the South-East constituency №217 in St. Petersburg, where Oksana Dmitrieva from the "Party of Growth" is running, the "Civilian Power" party nominated a woman whose name is also Oksana Dmitrieva (to confuse voters).

14. "Civic Platform"

After Prokhorov left the party in March 2015, the party's presence in the elections, already low in 2014, declined even further. After the change in leadership, the party's political position changed—becoming pro-government and patriotic—and a large number of party activists left the party.

However, the party did nominate a party list and candidates in single-member districts. On July 15, 237 candidates on the list were certified by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

The federal part of the list includes only three candidates: the chairman of the Federal Political Committee Shaikhutdinov; deputy chairman the Office of "A" ("Alpha") Special Purpose Center of the FSB, colonel Sergei Militsky; and the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of Entrepreneurs in the City of Moscow, Mikhail Vyshegorodtsev.

Most of the party's established politicians and those who formally remain in the party are not participating in the elections. The party candidate list for the single-member districts includes 68 individuals. Of those, the best chances has Rifat Shaikhutdinov, who is running in district №6 in Neftekamsk Bashkortostan (in this district there is no candidate from the "United Russia" party).

15. "Russian Party of Pensioners for Justice" (RPPJ)

The main scandal during the list nomination stage had to do with the CEC's refusal to validate the RPPJ candidate list in single-member districts. This was followed by another scandal, this time to do with the party congress and the subsequent removal of 42 candidates from the list already submitted to the CEC, including a number of key candidates, such as State Duma

deputy and Chelyabinsk Region Governor Mikhail Yurevich, and former Kaliningrad mayor Yuri Savenko.

RPPJ activists have a real network, possess experience in preparing and carrying out election campaigns at all levels, and are able to achieve success in them.

On July 29, opponents of E. Artyuhov (until then Mr. Artyuhov was number one on the RPPJ list) held an extraordinary party congress at which they voted for Mr. Artzuhov's removal from office, as well as for removal of four other candidates previously confirmed by the presidium of the RPPJ: M. Yurevich; former governor of the Nenets Autonomous District Vladimir Butov; State Duma deputy Oleg Savchenko; and former governor of the Pskov Region Yevgeny Mikhailov.

Formally, the CEC validated the party list of 331 candidates on July 19.

16. Parties without Registration Exemptions

- "Great Fatherland"
- "Will"
- "Union of Labor"
- "Native Party"

This review is based on the Report of the "Committee of Civil Initiatives" (available here: <https://komitetgi.ru/analytics/2930/>) under the guidance of the EPDE expert group:

*PhD in Political Science A.V. Kynev,
PhD in Law A.E. Lyubarev*