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Russian Federation: Sobyanin at the head of the 'Moscow corporation'

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The new mayor of Moscow will be Sergei Sobyanin, currently the deputy prime minister in the Russian government. On 15 October his candidacy was announced by President Medvedev, and on 21 October a vote on the matter will be held in the Moscow city parliament (this will be a mere formality, as the 'party of government' United Russia has an absolute majority of the votes there), and then the new mayor will be sworn in. One of the new mayor's main tasks will be to subject the capital's businesses to interest groups in Vladimir Putin's entourage.

The choice of Sobyanin as mayor of the richest city in Russia seems to be a personal decision by Putin. Sobyanin is a trusted collaborator of Putin; he has directed the President's Administration among other tasks, and is currently the deputy prime minister. The new mayor will have to confront the capital's numerous problems (of infrastructure, bureaucracy and so on); but one of his main tasks will be to coordinate the new division of influence and assets among the groups linked to the Putin elite, at the expense of those groups linked to the previous mayor, Yuri Luzhkov. At the same time, it must be expected that the political-business model created during Luzhkov's time, which offered many benefits from links to the Moscow government, will be maintained, and all that will happen is that the previous players will be replaced by those from Putin's entourage. This process may be accompanied by clashes, when the lucrative assets and potential profits from Moscow may become the subject of rivalries within the ruling elite. It is thus likely that Sobyanin's task will be to supervise this process and prevent open conflicts among the individual groups. <JR>