

Minister Khristenko Resigns

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Khristenko **Igor Tabakov**

President Dmitry Medvedev accepted Trade and Industry Minister Viktor Khristenko's resignation Wednesday, the Kremlin website reported, as the long-serving minister moves to take the position of head of the Eurasian Economic Commission.

Medvedev awarded Khristenko the Order of Merit for his services.

The resignation has been expected since December, when Customs Union partners Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan agreed on Khristenko's chairmanship of the new body.

Khristenko, who has served as head of the ministry since 2004, is married to Health and Social Development Minister Tatyana Golikova. Both faced accusations of corruption last year after a prominent doctor criticized the way the health ministry was being run.

The family also has close ties to industry. Khristenko's son-in-law, Vadim Shvetsov, is the main shareholder and chief executive of Sollers, an auto company that runs car-producing

joint ventures with partners including Ford and Isuzu.

In a sign that the family may retain its influence in the Cabinet, Kommersant reported in December that Shvetsov could actually replace his father-in-law at the ministry. A Sollers spokeswoman denied the report at the time.

Other potential candidates named by the paper included deputy Industry and Trade Minister Dmitry Manturov. No successor was named Wednesday.

The Eurasian Economic Commission was set up in November to coordinate the trade and economic policies of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia.

It will ultimately oversee implementation of the Declaration of Eurasian Economic Integration, an agreement signed at the same time that sets a road map for the creation of a European Union-style Eurasian Economic Union — including the possibility of a single currency — on the basis of the current Customs Union.

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