

State Banks Could Be Exempted from Paying Higher Dividends

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A government plan to make state-owned companies pay higher dividends, doubling payouts for banks, may not be applied across the board, the Central Bank's first deputy chairwoman, Ksenia Yudayeva, said Tuesday.

The Russian government is mulling a plan to require state-owned companies to pay out 35 percent of their profits by 2016, but no final decision has yet been taken.

"We think that you need to consider the specifics of the banking sector. In principle there could be a differentiated approach towards all companies depending on their strategy," Yudayeva told reporters on the sidelines of an investor conference organized by state-controlled VTB.

"Banks use profits for increasing capital and to increase lending. And this factor of course needs to be taken into account when establishing dividend policy," she said.

The Finance Ministry's dividend proposal was criticized last week by German Gref, CEO of Sberbank, which is Russia's other major state-owned bank. Gref warned that the bank would have to slow lending growth if required to pay out more.

Sberbank, majority owned by the Central Bank, paid shareholders 17 percent of its internationally reported profit as dividends for 2012, while VTB paid 16.5 percent.

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