

# What the Papers Say, Dec. 23, 2013

By [The Moscow Times](#)

December 23, 2013



## Kommersant

1. Olga Shestopal et al. report headlined "Under great pressure for money" says the Central Bank's course of getting rid of unreliable banks is becoming the official fiscal policy in the country. The Central Bank's campaign may leave the banking sector without billions of rubles as the Pension Fund and other large organizations refuse to deposit money in banks until they get reliability guarantees from financial institutions; pp 1, 8 (1,017 words).

2. Ilya Barabanov article headlined "'Pragmatism does not envisage revenge'" says businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, recently freed by the authorities, said at his first news conference in Berlin that he is not going to return to Russia in the near future and is not going to be engaged in political activities; pp 1, 3 (1,080 words).

3. Vyacheslav Kozlov article headlined "Blocking package" says that the communications

watchdog Roskomnadzor has drafted a list of web hosting providers which offer their services to criminals. Those are some 30 websites engaged in drug trafficking; pp 1, 5 (757 words).

4. Anna Balashova article headlined "MegaFon spreads roaming" says the mobile phone operator MegaFon has reduced roaming charges for its subscribers visiting the U.S., Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and China; pp 1, 9 (635 words).

5. Irina Nagornyykh article headlined "It becomes more cheerful to live not everywhere" says that public opinion polls have shown that social well-being of people in many Russian regions is improving. However, the opposite trend can be observed in 23 regions, in half of which local elections are to be held in 2014; p 2 (754 words).

6. Alexei Shapovalov article headlined "Economic Ministry sees threats to loans" says the Economic Development Ministry believes that the campaign to strip banks of their licenses conducted by the Central Bank may have a negative effect on the economic growth in the country; p 3 (625 words).

7. Viktor Khamrayev article headlined "They find more public than political in Khodorkovsky" says experts do not expect any political consequences from Mikhail Khodorkovsky's release. The leaders of the "democratic minority of the Russian political spectrum" have shown understanding as regards Khodorkovsky's decision to stay away from politics; p 3 (437 words).

8. Alexander Zheglov article headlined "Aviation designer dies as businessman" says the Investigative Committee has finished a probe into the killing of aviation designer Idris Fayzullin. Two Federal Security Service colonels are suspected of organizing his murder in order to get hold of his property in the Moscow region town of Zhukovsky; p 4 (709 words).

9. Pavel Tarasenko article headlined "South Sudan conflict spreads to oil" says a civil war in South Sudan threatens to destroy the country's oil sector. The U.S. has sent a special envoy to the country to try to persuade the sides in the conflict to start talks. Head of the Federation Council's international relations committee Mikhail Margelov comments on the issue; p 6 (636 words).

10. Galina Dudina interview with the new Austrian Foreign Minister, 27-year-old Sebastian Kurz, who speaks on relations with Moscow, NATO and on the political situation in Ukraine; p 6 (590 words).

11. Dmitry Butrin and Natalya Nepryakhina article headlined "Ukraine shares responsibilities with Russia" says Ukraine has changed the 2014 budget draft taking into account the loan from Russia. Kiev does not plan to carry out reforms required by the IMF; p 6 (581 words).

## Nezavisimaya Gazeta

1. Alexandra Samarina article headlined "Kremlin not afraid of Khodorkovsky as politician" says that experts attribute the Kremlin's decision to release businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky to the fact that he has stopped posing a threat to the authorities; pp 1, 3 (1,297 words).
2. Alina Terekhova article headlined "Passport to cost five times more for Russians" says Russia is to make additional 20 billion rubles thanks to the shift to electronic passports, as a new hi-tech document will cost 1,000 rubles (\$30) instead of the current 200 rubles; pp 1-2 (602 words).
3. Alexei Gorbachev article headlined "Prokhorov does not decide on candidates" says new leader of the Civil Platform party Irina Prokhorova, the sister of billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov, will lead the party list at the Moscow City Duma election; pp 1, 3 (559 words).
4. Yekaterina Trifonova article headlined "Debtors to be punished with broom" says debtors in Russia are to be made to clean streets and do other community work as the authorities want to oblige people to pay their debts; pp 1, 3 (455 words).
5. Igor Naumov article headlined "Highway investors" says motorists will be charged for access to the Moscow ring road from M1 highway as from Jan. 1 2014; pp 1, 4 (1,003 words).
6. Anastasia Bashkatova article headlined "Chinese to give coal to country" says that China is to make investment in the coal production in Siberia. Russia does not want to develop the deposits alone due to high costs; pp 1, 4 (877 words).
7. Editorial headlined "Horror stories on Christmas Eve" says the Western media are talking about the Russian military threat ahead of the NATO summit in Chicago and call on Europe to cooperate with Russia rather than be afraid of the country; p 2 (489 words).
8. Vladislav Maltsev article headlined "Pan-Turkism added to rally against Islamophobia" says Tatarstan's nationalists are going to take part in a rally against the violation of Muslim rights to be held in Moscow in mid-January 2014; p 2 (535 words).
9. Alena Terekhova article headlined "Nord Stream becomes money losing" says that only half of the capacity of the Nord Stream gas pipeline is currently used. However, Gazprom has already built another pipeline as part of the project, which experts consider to be geopolitical

rather than economic; p 2 (773 words).

10. Yury Paniyev article headlined "We say Montreux and mean Geneva 2" reports on the preparation for the international peace conference on Syria to be held in the Swiss city of Montreux in January 2014; p 6 (516 words).

11. Darya Tsilyurik article headlined "Arab League against Kerry's plan" says the foreign ministers of the Arab League states at a meeting in Cairo have expressed support to the Palestinian authority. They oppose the Middle East settlement plan drafted by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry as they do not want Israeli troops to stay in the Palestinian authority. The Palestinians do not oppose the presence of international peacekeepers, though; p 6 (549 words).

12. Sergei Tolstov report "Pact of Putin and Yanukovich" looks at Russian-Ukrainian relations; p 11 (1,200 words).

13. Viktoria Panfilova report "EU not to be left without Russian gas" says that the European Parliament is satisfied with cooperation in the energy sector with Moscow; p 11 (950 words).

## **Vedomosti**

1. Anastasia Kornya et al. report headlined "Unconditionally free" says bankers, investors and officials believe that the release of businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky will not affect the Russian investment climate; pp 1-2 (1,830 words).

2. Editorial headlined "Poor provinces" says the current economic policy in Russia threatens regions with financial instability and makes them more dependent on Moscow; pp 1, 6 (407 words).

3. Natalya Ishchenko article headlined "Hungarian Magnit" says Russia's largest retailer Magnit may set up a large transport company owning 1,000 lorries in Hungary; pp 1, 18 (483 words).

4. Polina Khimshiashvili article headlined "Non-Olympic eight" says that despite the call of the Swiss president on other European leaders not to boycott the Winter Olympics in Sochi, the leaders of the majority of developed countries will not visit the event; p 3 (373 words).

5. Lilia Biryukova report "Family party" says that Mikhail Prokhorov has resigned as leader

of the Civil Platform party. However, the party will not lose the Kremlin's favor, article says; p 3 (600 words).

6. Olga Kuvshinova report "Russians disappointed" says that according to sociologists, the pessimism of Russians is growing: people are awaiting a rise in inflation, unemployment and corruption; p 5 (700 words).

7. Editorial headlined "Proof of hostage" says Khodorkovsky's freedom has shown that some secret agreement between him and Putin was reached; it makes the West regard Russia as an authoritarian state where one person makes all decisions; p 6 (345 words).

8. Kirill Kharatyan article headlined "Person of week: Hans Dietrich Genscher" says former German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher has turned out to be a good interlocutor for Putin as the latter has agreed to free Khodorkovsky thanks to talks conducted by the German politician; p 7 (347 words).

9. Anna Afanasyeva article headlined "They will help TV Center with money again" says the TV Center channel will get financing from the Moscow city budget in 2014 despite the fact that it has become a federal television channel. TV Center and the Moskva Media holding company will share 6.2 billion rubles in subsidies from the city authorities; p (451 words).

10. Yekaterina Derbilova et al. interview with Sistema financial corporation head Vladimir Yevtushenkov speaking on the investment climate in Russia and the release of Mikhail Khodorkovsky; pp 8-9 (5,051 words).

11. Mikhail Serov report "Gazprom opens Arctic" says that Gazprom has begun to extract oil at the Prirazlomnaya deposit in the Pechora Sea; p 10 (550 words).

## **Izvestia**

1. Yelena Teslova article headlined "Amnesty for Serdyukov being postponed" says former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov may be unable to use the presidential amnesty which has come into effect in Russia; pp 1, 3 (414 words).

2. Sergei Podosenov article headlined "Deputies suggest that fictitious parties should be eliminated" says that a State Duma member from the Liberal Democratic Party has suggested that the registration of the political parties that have not taken part in elections for two years or failed to get the minimum support of the electorate, should be canceled; pp 1, 4 (531 words).

3. Vladislav Vdovin article headlined "Last word being remembered" says that Khodorkovsky as a public figure has lost his image due to his request for pardoning and his early release. Putin has become a moral winner in this situation, the author believes; pp 1, 3 (605 words).

4. Petr Kozlov and Alena Sivkova article headlined "Rights activists ready to work with Khodorkovsky" says Russian rights activists have expressed readiness to cooperate with former businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky; pp 1, 3 (798 words).

5. Alena Sivkova interview with the widow of killed Nefteyugansk mayor, Farida Islamova, commenting on Khodorkovsky's release and criticizing his previous business practice; p 3 (875 words).

6. Yanina Sokolovskaya article headlined "Viktor Yanukovich goes to Moscow again" says Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich is to visit Moscow this week to take part in the meeting of the Eurasian Council to be attended by Belarussian and Kazakh presidents; p 7 (761 words).

7. Konstantin Volkov interview with head of the Russian State Duma's Committee on International Affairs Alexei Pushkov who looks at the "liberal revolution" in the West; p 7 (750 words).

8. Konstantin Volkov article headlined "Syrian opposition does not believe in Al-Assad's keeping power" says the West is looking for a political force capable of confronting Islamists in Syria; p 8 (606 words).

## **Rossiiskaya Gazeta**

1. Yulia Krivoshapko article headlined "Interest rate attention" says the Central Bank has put an end to loans with extremely high interest rates. The author details a new law regulating bank loans, which comes into effect as from January 2014; pp 1, 7 (900 words).

2. Yulia Krivoshapko article headlined "Economy let down by loans" sums up the economic results of 2013 and gives a forecast for the next year; pp 1, 3 (500 words).

3. Vladislav Vorobyev article headlined "'Fight for power is not mine'" reports on a news conference by Mikhail Khodorkovsky in Berlin; p 8 (1,000 words).

## **Moskovsky Komsomolets**

1. Mikhail Rostovski article headlined "Khodorkovsky: End of story?" welcomes the role of former German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher in the freeing of Mikhail Khodorkovsky; pp 1-2 (700 words).
2. Andrei Yashlavsky interview "To get message to Putin" with German political scientist Alexander Rahr who speaks about some details of the release of Mikhail Khodorkovsky; p 2 (800 words).
3. Natalya Rozhkova interview "Rodina not satisfied with Kadyrov's explanations" with Alexei Zhuravlev, a State Duma deputy and the leader of the party Rodina, who comments on his fight with lawmaker Adam Delimkhanov; p 3 (400 words).

## **Novaya Gazeta**

1. Pavel Kanygin interview with Ukrainian businessman supporting the opposition Petr Poroshenko speaking on the ongoing pro-European protests in Kiev and the political situation in the country; pp 6-7 (2,021 words).

## **RBK Daily**

1. Alexander Litoy et al. article headlined "Political exile" says that Russian businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky has said during his press conference in Berlin that he is not going to get involved in politics; pp 1-2 (900 words).
2. Stepan Opalev article headlined "Not listening attentively" says that, according to the results of a recent VTsIOM poll, only 9 percent of Russians watched President Vladimir Putin's annual state-of-the-nation address. Experts say the number of those interested in the address has hit a record low; p 3 (200 words).
3. Alexander Litoy interview with an amnestied defendant in the Bolotnaya case, Nikolay Kavkazsky, speaking about the amnesty, Bolotnaya case and the prospects for the Russian opposition and politics in general; p 3 (450 words).

## **Noviye Izvestia**

1. Sergei Putilov article headlined "Burden presses" says experts make gloomy forecast for the Russian economy in 2014; pp 1, 3 (600 words).
2. Yekaterina Dyatlovskaya article headlined "'These are game rules'" looks at former tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky's press conference in Berlin; pp 1-2 (700 words).
3. Margarita Alekhina article headlined "Victims of distrust" focuses on the latest Public Chamber's report on the activities of non-commercial organizations, or NGOs, working in Russia; p 5 (800 words).

## **Komsomolskaya Pravda**

1. Alexander Igorev article headlined "Race for power is not my cup of tea" looks at former tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky's press conference in Berlin; pp 1, 4 (600 words).
2. Vladimir Vorsobin article headlined "Khodorkovsky's minefield" comments on Mikhail Khodorkovsky's press conference in Berlin and his future in Russian politics; p 4 (300 words).

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