

Former Pro-Kremlin Internet Troll Nominated for Top Spot in Ruling Political Party

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Vladimir Burmatov **Vedomosti**

United Russia Chairman Dmitry Medvedev has nominated Duma deputy Vladimir Burmatov to lead the political party's central executive committee. Sources at the Kommersant newspaper [say](#) the move, which comes days after United Russia won a spectacular super-majority in the parliament, is part of an effort to restructure the party's governing body.

Burmatov, who won a single-constituency race last Sunday in Chelyabinsk, confirmed to Kommersant that he met with Medvedev on Wednesday, Sept. 21, and says he hopes for the support of the rest of the party's leadership. He promised to say more about his plans for restructuring United Russia after a vote on his candidacy for the central executive committee.

For years before he joined the Duma, Burmatov was one of the most infamous figures of the pro-Kremlin youth movement, rising to prominence as a youth organizer for United Russia.

In early 2010, roughly two years before he was elected to the Duma for the first time, Burmatov gained online notoriety after deliberately inflating his blog's ranking and launching dozens of bot accounts on LiveJournal to promote pro-Kremlin youth content. In order to flag comments by these accounts, Internet users started using the acronym "B.I.N.Kh." (signifying an obscene phrase inviting Burmatov to go away).

Also in 2010, Burmatov was involved in another online scandal, after he tweeted images of himself and another United Russia youth leader supposedly helping with firefighting efforts outside Voronezh. Internet users later exposed the photos as fakes.

Burmatov is also one of Russia's many state officials suspected of plagiarizing significant parts of his university thesis. In August 2013, the online "Dissernet" community reported that his thesis "borrowed" significantly from existing works. (Researchers at the Russian State Library later determined that no more than 35 percent of Burmatov's thesis was plagiarized.) Soon thereafter, he resigned as deputy chairman of the Duma's committee on education.

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