

Valentina I. Matvienko

Governor of St. Petersburg



Valentina Ivanovna Matvienko was elected the Governor of St. Petersburg on October, 3, 2003. She is the first female governor in Russia, and she has pledged to prioritize development of the city's economy.

Her views complement President Vladimir Putin's second term policy priority: to double Russia's GDP. Ms. Matvienko has vowed to double the budget of St. Petersburg during her four-year term in office. In order to accomplish this task she brought in "effective" managers from the economic sector, instead of politicians, to serve as her vice-governors. The vice-governors are working to improve internal problems plaguing the city's investment attractiveness (see St. Petersburg regional profile for elaboration).

These internal developments will help to bring in foreign business by offering an industrialized city with an insatiable desire for foreign investment. Ms. Matvienko has attracted automakers Nissan and Toyota (see St. Petersburg regional profile) and says that she is in talks with six Japanese companies to set up auto plants in the city. However her greatest task of late is in seeking U.S. investors.

She recently toured the U.S. to attract investment to the St. Petersburg region. She is the first Russian governor to visit the U.S. She has met with 15 potential investors, including Morgan Stanley, AIG, and Citigroup. The visiting Russian delegation said it generated U.S. interest primarily in major infrastructure projects and Ms. Matvienko adds that U.S. investments accounted for 19% of the total investment in St. Petersburg in 2005. She is also looking to attract investment in high-tech education saying that 20% of the technical potential in Russia is in St. Petersburg.

Her current U.S. trip should prove successful knowing her former accomplishments in rising through the political ranks of the Soviet Union and within the Foreign Ministry. She devoted much of her education to diplomatic training and her positions in the government reflect her devotion to issues pertaining to St. Petersburg, regional relations, women, foreign affairs, and social policy. Her devotion has not gone unnoticed taking into account her achievements in the government and awards bestowed upon her. She received the Badge of Honor in 1976, the Order of the Working Red Banner in 1982, and the Order for Services to the Homeland of the 3rd Degree in 1999. □

Mikhail Margelov

Keep Him On Your Radar Screen



Mikhail Margelov is a prominent and influential politician in Russia due to his knowledge of the international community and savvy concerning global issues affecting Russia's relationship to the world.

His international expertise and influence is vast. Within Russia, he may be considered the face of Russia's foreign policy. He is the chairman of the Federation Council's Committee for Foreign Affairs representing the Pskov region. He converses with international media about a variety of hot-button issues such as Chechnya, the "cartoon scandal," and Hamas' electoral victory by supporting the overarching political views of the Kremlin (he is a representative of the "party of power" United Russia) without alienating the international community.

He portrays himself as a moderate easily able to identify Russia's mistakes and triumphs, yet not hindering Russia's foreign policy. This know-how may come from his impressive background in the news agency.

He was a manager at the RIA-Novosti Information Agency and later became a director of the Russian Information Center. This background equipped him well when he served as a consultant, specifically in charge of contacts with foreign media, to Vladimir Putin's Electoral Headquarters in 2000. In this position he combined his skills he acquired at the news agencies with his previous profession of consultant. His first key position dealing with international issues came when he worked for three American consultant groups.

On the global stage he holds such positions as Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe (PACE), within PACE he is the Chairman of the European Democrat Group among many other titles and distinctions, Chairman of the Council of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization, and CEO of the Egyptian Friendship Association to name a few.

Early in his career he taught Arabic and his working language at PACE is English. He is adept at dealing with international issues and improving the reputation of Russia. Globally, he is highly regarded as a representative of Russia. He is a figure the business community will want to be aware of. He stands a good chance of increasing his political standing in Russia. □