

Panel: Russia's Leadership Transition and Its Implications in East Asia (Violet/Cosmos)

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Organizing Institution: Diplomatic Academy, MFA of Russia

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Since Vladimir Putin succeeded Boris Yeltsin as President of the Russian Federation, Russian elites have coordinated themselves well in maintaining strong presidential powers. This coordination has been tightly cemented by an abundance of oil money. Even though there have been some protests against unfair electoral procedures in the two previous elections, Putin's party has cultivated favorable conditions for the rise of a hegemonic party system. Russia's proportional representation electoral system and the characteristics of the Russian party system both ensure the hegemonic status of the United Russia Party. All in all, Putin's de facto third term has started with solid domestic political stability and firm elite support. These domestic conditions allow the Putin administration to pay much more attention to Central and North East Asia than before. This is good news for North Korea because Russia's heightened concern with this region means North Korea will have one more card to play. Furthermore, the growing cooperation between Russia and China in attempting to contain American influence in the region gives new hope to North Korea. In addition to its political significance, Russian and Chinese cooperation is also economically significant for North Korea, which has desperately clung to the Special Economic Zone Development Plan on its northern border.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.
