

Beat: Business

## MEETING OF THE RUSSIAN POPULAR FRONT S INTERREGIONAL FORUM

### PUTIN TOOK PART IN A PLENARY SESSION

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**USPA NEWS** - The Russian Popular Front's first interregional forum addressed specific issues the regions face in their work to implement presidential executive orders of May 2012 and instructions issued following ONF meetings...

The Russian Popular Front's first interregional forum addressed specific issues the regions face in their work to implement presidential executive orders of May 2012 and instructions issued following ONF meetings. More than 600 people took part in the session, including civil society activists from Russia's southern regions, federal and regional experts, representatives from the executive authorities, and journalists.

Hereafter the statement made on January 25, 2016 in Stavropol when Vladimir Putin took part in a plenary session :

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA VLADIMIR PUTIN :

Good afternoon, friends,

I greet you all at this, the Russian Popular Front's first interregional forum. There are plans to hold another three such conferences this year.

I hope and believe that this will provide an opportunity for exchanging information, in-depth study and analysis of the situation in specific regions, evaluating what is taking place, and gaining a deeper understanding of the specific circumstances in the regions in this part of the country and examining their problems and difficulties.

I think it is important too that these forums' organisation will get an increasing number of active and committed people involved in the ONF's work. There are such people in probably every region, town and village.

The ONF gives them the chance to join the discussions and, I hope, to not just take part in the discussions, but also in resolving serious issues, the most pressing and sensitive issues for people, problems such as raising the quality and affordability of healthcare, education and public utilities services, and taking part in projects that have already won public support such as the For Fair Public Procurement project, Let's Evaluate the Quality of Roads, Popular Initiative, and For Borrowers' Rights.

The activists from the For Fair Procurement project, for example, have analysed purchases made by 100 customers from 40 different regions and drew up the 2015 Index of Wastefulness of State Authorities and Companies. I think the relevant agencies, including those responsible for fighting corruption, should pay close attention to these facts and information that the ONF provides.

The For Borrowers' Rights project is designed to defend the interests of consumers of financial services. This is a particularly topical issue and the project's participants have already done a lot to raise public awareness and help individuals who have ended up in debt-related difficulties.

Getting new people from the regions involved in these and other ONF projects will most certainly be a useful contribution to the common effort.

Colleagues,

We are holding this first interregional forum in southern Russia, and it is not by chance that we chose to gather here, in Stavropol Territory. We all know that our southern regions' economic and social development is very closely linked to development in the agriculture sector.

This sector was the focus of particular attention during yesterday's discussions, the forum's first day of work, as were interethnic

relations, fighting wastefulness and corruption, raising our people's quality of everyday life, and strengthening dialogue between the authorities and society.

My colleagues said just now that the results of these discussions have been summarised and proposed solutions to the most pressing issues have been drafted. This approach needs to continue, of course, at the future interregional conferences.

At the ONF's third action forum at the end of this year, we will review the results and analyse what we have managed to accomplish in terms of resolving the regions' problems. This will not be an easy task, of course, but your experience, determination, and focus on results are the proof that you are up to this task.

When I looked over your discussions from yesterday and the proposals you drafted, I said to myself that we will not limit ourselves to meeting only with the ONF core members. I, at least, will not stop at this, but, based on your work's results and analysis of the material you provide, will get my colleagues, the regional heads, together in Moscow to analyse your proposals together with them and look at what can realistically be carried out. Later, at the end of the year, we will look at what we have achieved through these common efforts, what we have not yet managed to do, and why.

As you recall, it was here in southern Russia, in Volgograd in 2011, that the proposal first came to establish the Russian Popular Front. Since that time, the movement has proven its effectiveness, established its place, and won the public's trust. People's respect for your work is one of the key conditions for the ONF's successful work.

It is also important to build up relations with the local executive and legislative authorities, with the regional authorities. We know very well that you are not met everywhere with welcome and understanding.

The ONF activists know this better than I. Sometimes you are not welcome at all because you shed light on some of the serious problems that the authorities at various levels have not yet managed to resolve. But these serious problems are what concern the public, and this is the most convincing argument for you to continue your work.

Yes, many difficulties can arise, but this is no excuse for tolerating indifference to people's needs. I am sure that you understand this well and do everything you can to work in constructive and reasonable fashion, for the public benefit.

I would like to hear from you today your thoughts and ideas on how we can move forward and resolve the most serious and urgent issues that you discussed yesterday.

Thank you very much for your attention.

(...)

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN : I will make sure to get my colleagues, regional heads and representatives of various federal ministries and agencies together in Moscow so that your proposals "" though I do not think we can put them all into practice, but those that we can "" are not ignored but are taken into consideration in major practical solutions. We will definitely get together in Moscow to discuss this.

(...)

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