

22.06.2026

Lyudmila Guseva: “Everything that the city does is measured by the quality of life of Moscow residents”

The Commission on Economic and Social Policy of the Moscow City Duma traditionally handles a significant share of legislative work. What are the specifics of this work? Where do Moscow City budget revenues come from? What are the strategic development priorities of Moscow for the next few years? These and many other questions were answered by Lyudmila Ivanovna Guseva, head of the Commission, in her interview to BM Moscow Foresight.

- This is not the first time that Muscovites have trusted you to represent their interests in the Moscow City Duma. Which of your achievements as a deputy are you truly proud of?

- In the context of a modern megacity, which Moscow undoubtedly is, paramount importance lies not only in the high-quality and conscientious work of each individual, but also in the harmonious, well-coordinated interaction of the entire team—all elements of the highly complex urban governance mechanism. Without this, it is my personal conviction that the capital could not have achieved the tangible accomplishments it possesses today, which are recognized at the international level.

- It is known that since the beginning of the current convocation alone, 16 draft laws of the city of Moscow and 6

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draft resolutions of the Moscow Duma have been considered within the framework of the Commission on Economic and Social Policy. What is this about?

- These are the foundational regulatory legal acts for the metropolis's vital operations—the annually adopted laws on the capital's budget, the budget of the Moscow City Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund, and the laws on the execution of the respective budget for the reporting period.

These are critical laws designed to provide support for specific categories of Muscovites, participants in the special military operation and their family members, and to establish additional social support guarantees for orphans and children left without parental care.

A number of significant legislative initiatives aimed at improving tax and investment mechanisms in key industries, including high-tech manufacturing, which are necessary for the further successful and sustainable economic development of our city, have been reviewed.

Annual reports on the activities of the Control and Accounts Chamber of Moscow and on the activities of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the City of Moscow are formalized by resolutions of the Duma and also undergo preliminary review within the relevant committee.

- What main and new challenges face the Commission today?

- The Commission on Economic and Social Policy, which I have chaired for three consecutive terms now, has essentially combined the powers of three previously existing working bodies. It is quite natural that the list of issues within its remit is also very broad. Without listing them all, this primarily involves reviewing the city's three-year budget laws and budget execution, legislative initiatives in social policy, taxation, investment, valuation, and insurance activities, as well as a number of other areas.

This also includes participating in the development of Moscow's socio-economic development plans and monitoring the allocation of funds directed to financing state programs.

An important line of activity is the improvement of legislation in the sphere of social support for the population and regulation of social and labor relations: social guarantees, remuneration of labor, employment of the population, job quota allocation, use

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of foreign labor, development of the social partnership system, provision of proper working conditions and occupational health and safety, leisure and health recovery for workers and members of their families, and other aspects.

- Moscow's economy is growing, despite all the difficulties it has had to face in recent years. In this regard, Sergey Semyonovich Sobyanin once said: "I think the greater the external pressure on Russia, the stronger we become!" And what do you think, Lyudmila Ivanovna?

- First and foremost, I would like to note that over the past 14–15 years, our Mayor’s team has carried out colossal, comprehensive work aimed at strengthening the capital's economy. This is happening in literally every sphere of life in the capital: from expanding business support measures and creating conditions to boost investment activity, to developing the tourism industry, and establishing new cutting-edge manufacturing facilities and employment centers. Today, the city boasts a modern infrastructure designed to ensure growth in knowledge-intensive and high-tech industries.

Thanks to the accumulated resilience of the city economy and timely support measures, we were prepared for the unprecedented challenges and sanctions pressure that our country faced.

This is evidenced by the fact that domestic suppliers managed to replace foreign organizations that left the Russian market in the shortest possible time. This includes such sensitive sectors as pharmaceuticals, food products, technology, consumer materials, medical equipment, and many others.

Thus, the resilience of the capital's economy in the face of new realities stems from years of steady effort by the entire city administration. Ultimately, the challenges we encountered only served to further mobilize our resources.

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- The Russian capital concluded 2025 with results that seemed virtually unattainable just a few years ago. What keeps Moscow running? What constitutes the sources of the capital's budget revenue in 2026?

- It should be noted that budget revenues, projected at nearly ₽6.4 trillion this year, are driven by the value added generated within the capital.

The positive dynamics of income are entirely supported by the city's economy. The main growth factors are increased corporate profits, higher employee wages, and strong business investment activity. At the same time, the revenue sources of the city treasury are diversified across industries. The primary contribution comes from high-tech sectors such as mechanical engineering, electronics, and pharmaceuticals, as well as revenues from tourism and integrated urban development.

It should also be noted that in recent years, the share of tax revenues generated by the so-called "volatile industries" in the total volume of revenues has significantly decreased, which also has a positive effect on the stability of the Moscow budget revenue base.

- What priorities are embedded in Moscow's development strategy for the next decade?

- The Mayor of Moscow has defined the strategic goals for the capital's development, with a balanced budget serving as one of the most critical tools for achieving them. For the upcoming period, the draft budget incorporates key priorities, specifically:

- Providing reliable social security for Moscow residents, alongside comprehensive support for participants of the special military operation and their families;

- Improving the quality and accessibility of public services;

- Implementing large-scale plans for urban infrastructure development, and creating a comfortable and safe city environment;

- Supporting the real sector of the economy to ensure technological sovereignty and leadership in critical industries.

- You stated that over the upcoming three-year period, one of the primary objectives of spending-side budget policy will be ensuring robust social protection for Moscow residents. How is this reflected in practice? What specific areas will receive these funds?

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- As the chair of the relevant committee, I can confirm that Moscow maintains continuity of priorities in its budget policy, with the social orientation of the budget remaining one of the primary focuses — more than half of all expenditures are social in nature.

Thus, about ₽2.5 trillion are provided for the implementation of the "Social Support for Residents of the City of Moscow" program over a three-year period, with over ₽800 billion allocated for the current year. This includes payments and benefits in monetary and in-kind forms for housing and communal services, the provision of discounted and free travel on public transport, providing disabled people with technical means of rehabilitation, purchasing vouchers to sanatorium-resort institutions, subsidized medicines, and other areas.

I would like to highlight that currently about 4.5 million Moscow residents benefit from social support measures financed by the city budget.

Furthermore, the Moscow budget provides for a 6% indexation of social benefits, effective January 1 of this year, for families with children, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities.

Naturally, the focus of special attention remains the entire spectrum of issues concerning comprehensive support for SMO (Special Military Operation) participants and their families in all areas. This includes regular payments and a wide range of benefits, resolving day-to-day matters related to housing, job search, and enrolling children in kindergartens and schools, as well as providing free legal and medical assistance, among other measures. Here, the primary goal is to ensure that service members and their families receive comprehensive support for any emerging issues and life situations.

The next important priority is to improve the quality and accessibility of public services. The capital is creating a modern, accessible, and multifaceted environment for a fulfilling life, combining a high standard of education, medical care under the new Moscow standards, a variety of cultural events, and grassroots sports.

An essential condition for improving the quality and accessibility of services provided is the modernization of social infrastructure.

The budget provides funds to continue the large-scale modernization of education, healthcare, social protection, culture, and sports institutions—totaling about ₽650 billion for the current year and about ₽1.9 trillion over the planning period.

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- Who contributes the most money to Moscow's treasury? What is the city's largest budget revenue source?

- The base of the budget's revenue side consists of tax deductions, with up to 80% of receipts generated from two main sources: personal income tax. This is the most reliable source, the volume of receipts from which grows annually, primarily due to the fact that around 200,000 new jobs are created in the city each year.

The second source is the corporate income tax. It is important to note here that only 30% of our receipts from this source come from the volatile sector, while all the rest come from organizations in the stable sector. Therefore, we have good reason to believe that our budget base is sustainable and diversified both by taxpayers and by economic sectors.

We do not have any so-called major or backbone taxpayers; all entities are fairly evenly distributed across sectors, which is one of the main factors behind the stability of the city's financial system.

- As Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin stated, private businesses invested ₽386 billion into the manufacturing industry in 2025, which is 33% more than the previous year. If it’s not a secret, what are these investments being spent on in Moscow?

- The bulk of investments is allocated to large-scale infrastructure projects and the development of cutting-edge manufacturing. Currently, metropolitan industry consists of over 4,600 enterprises with a workforce exceeding 755,000 employees.

A specialized infrastructure has been created for innovative and high-tech companies. First and foremost, this refers to the "Technopolis Moscow" Special Economic Zone. This is a territory with a special legal status, spanning nearly 400 hectares, which offers a preferential business regime for investors..

For several years now, Technopolis has been a leader in international and national industry rankings, serving as the flagship of the capital’s new industry. Its enterprises manufacture state-of-the-art products in microelectronics, pharmaceuticals, machine tool building, and other sectors.

Technoparks represent the next major growth driver. These modern sites enable companies to launch innovative production operations quickly. They provide residents with space, equipment, and various support measures, including grants, tax incentives, and subsidies.

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The development of technoparks is primarily funded by private investment.

New technoparks open within existing scientific and industrial associations or are built from scratch as part of redevelopment projects for former industrial zones and other underutilized areas.

The most critical advantage of working in technoparks is access to city services and participation in cooperative chains alongside other residents. Many technoparks provide companies with opportunities for startup development.

Today, 53 technoparks operate in Moscow. They house the production facilities of over 2,400 high-tech companies. The total number of people employed there is around 78,000.

Notably, more than 90% of the residents represent small and medium-sized businesses.

The Moscow Innovation Cluster has become a key link in the city's ecosystem, ensuring interaction among its main participants: business, science, universities, and government authorities. Most of these cooperative chains are formed thanks to i.moscow, the country's leading digital platform.

The cluster allows innovators to seamlessly navigate the main stages of the lifecycle when developing and implementing new products and solutions.

The platform provides support tools that help create startups, as well as develop and pilot innovative products.

- Does the current Moscow budget include financial support for small and medium-sized businesses?

- This sector receives special attention; our adopted three-year budget allocates over ₽65 billion to support entrepreneurship. The city assists in creating and promoting Moscow-made products, providing comprehensive assistance from the initial idea to scaling up.

Using budget funds, Moscow helps with business registration, property selection, skill development, and a range of other services. Our city also provides financial support, including subsidies and grants, as well as concessional lending for equipment purchasing, leasing, and other manufacturing purposes.

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- What is the current unemployment situation in Moscow, and how is it being addressed?

- Moscow is a city with near-zero unemployment and a high demand for personnel. At the beginning of the year, the official registered unemployment rate was less than 0.2%, which is several times lower than in a number of leading European countries. At the same time, the employed population of the capital stands at around 7.4 million people, according to statistical data.

The Moscow labor market is one of the largest and most diversified, with specialists of all skill levels in high demand across all sectors of the economy. To help job seekers navigate employers' offers and find positions that match their interests and skills, the city is developing the 'Professions of the Future' Center for Innovative Career Services. Its aggregated database features more than half a million vacancies.

The Center partners with over three thousand employers, and I have personally interacted with some of them during my multiple visits to the Center for Innovative Human Resources Services.

This Center offers dozens of short-term educational programs in the most in-demand sectors of the urban economy.

- What comprehensive package of support measures has been established in Moscow for Special Military Operation (SMO) veterans? Does it include psychological assistance and retraining?

- Support for participants of the special military operation and their family members is under special monitoring.

The capital was the first in the country to establish a Center that provides comprehensive assistance for this category. In particular, it offers all city services available in a one-stop-shop mode. The list of measures includes legal aid, psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance, career counseling, vocational guidance, selection of training programs, employment assistance, provision of technical rehabilitation tools, assistance in home adaptation tailored to the individual needs of persons with disabilities, installation of lifting platforms for people with disabilities, utility bill compensation, transport tax exemption, subsidies for purchasing gas equipment, and other types of support.

As chair of the relevant committee responsible for reviewing Moscow's three-year budget, I must emphasize that financing this area remains a priority. The budget law we passed fully provisions all necessary allocations for regular payments and a wide range of benefits. It addresses housing issues, job searches, enrolling children in nearby schools and kindergartens, free legal

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and medical aid, rehabilitation, and psychological recovery support. Our primary goal is to provide service members and their families with comprehensive assistance for any issues or life situations they face.

- Lyudmila Ivanovna, please tell us what Moscow is doing to provide assistance to older citizens?

- One of the main support tools is the city social standard, which is the minimum income of a non-working pensioner guaranteed by the city. The standard amount is indexed annually, and since January 1 of the current year, it has been ₽27,401 per month. 1.8 million Muscovites receive this pension supplement.

Non-working Moscow pensioners are also currently eligible for various benefits, including free travel on public city and suburban transport, free spa and resort treatment based on medical indications, and travel to the place of treatment and back.

Certain categories of citizens can be compensated for the costs of housing and utility services.

Additionally, lump-sum payments are provided for Muscovites who have reached the age of 100 and older, as well as for anniversary couples who have been married for 50 years or more.

Of course, the large-scale project "Moscow Longevity" remains the most important element in the support system.

Today, there are more than 140 Moscow Longevity Centers operating in the capital, practically in every district. Moreover, the network of these Centers is constantly expanding, and the number of participants is growing as well—already exceeding 740,000 people, which indicates the high demand for the project among Muscovites.

- Are the deputies of the Moscow City Duma satisfied with how the Smart City program is developing?

- One of the key factors shaping Moscow's image as a modern, successful city is its high level of digitalization. The capital's information technologies assist residents, make their lives more comfortable, and save them significant time.

Today, 91% of Moscow residents actively use the city's electronic utilities and services.

Last year marked the 10th anniversary of the launch of the updated version of the Moscow Government portal, mos.ru.

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Currently, the portal features 460 different services and utilities for citizens and businesses. In terms of the number of electronic services offered, it has no equal among municipal portals, not only in Russia but also worldwide.

In addition to electronic government services, Moscow has created a unique ecosystem of e-democracy platforms and services. Thanks to this system, Muscovites can participate in the city's development and resolve most of their requests quickly and efficiently, without any distraction from work and leisure.

Moscow became the first metropolis in the world to create a voting platform for urban development issues called "Active Citizen." Thanks to the portal, we can learn the opinion of millions of Muscovites on almost any topic—from street renaming and landscaping to large-scale projects like the renovation program. To date, more than 7 million participants are registered on the portal.

Absolutely all multi-apartment buildings in the capital are connected to the "Electronic Home" platform, where residents can manage their apartments, communicate with neighbors, and hold online general meetings of owners.

Through the "City of Ideas" platform, citizens can submit their proposals to improve life in the capital.

In recent years, remote electronic voting in Moscow has become an integral element of the electoral system. Today, it is impossible to imagine holding elections at any level without this reliable and convenient tool.

Currently, this is the most popular format for expressing one's will among Muscovites:

I would like to note that in the 2024 Moscow City Duma elections, more than 95% of the votes were cast using electronic voting.

- How, in your view, do the development of healthcare and the Moscow Longevity Centers address important social tasks? What is the life expectancy in the Moscow region?

Everything the city does today is ultimately measured by the quality of life of Muscovites, which is why healthcare is one of Moscow's top priorities.

In 2025, we completed a large-scale modernization of outpatient clinics and introduced a new standard for emergency care,

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multiplying the speed and quality of medical assistance.

Furthermore, we have created a unified digital medical framework that includes telemedicine services, online appointment scheduling, electronic medical records, digital prescriptions, medical certificates, and sick leaves.

Artificial intelligence technologies are being actively implemented: even now, digital assistants help analyze health complaints, diagnostic test results, and even assist in making diagnoses.

The result of this comprehensive effort is the rising life expectancy of Muscovites, which has already reached 79 years and continues to grow.

- You have traveled the world a lot and have probably been to the largest megacities in America, Europe, and Asia. What is your impression of New York, Shanghai, and London? Or is Moscow still the best city on Earth?

- Indeed, over the many years, I have visited numerous countries. For me, as a person who was born and raised here and who loves our capital, Moscow is, of course, the best city on Earth. At the same time, there are objective data from independent international rating agencies, according to which Moscow holds leading positions in a whole range of areas. In particular, it ranks ahead of major world capitals—from New York to Tokyo—in the number of tourist attractions. Based on last year's results, our Moscow ranked among the top three cities for the number of cultural events hosted. The capital also became the runner-up in terms of green spaces, surpassing London in this indicator.

Previously, Moscow ranked among the top 10 global cities for innovation attractiveness and placed in the top three for urban infrastructure development.

The city's main achievements are driven by its strong positions in "Technological Development", "Creative Industries", and "Urban Environment". This is far from a complete list of our city's accomplishments over the past few years.

In my opinion, the most significant factor is that Moscow, having achieved impressive results, does not rest on its laurels but continues to develop dynamically.

Sergei KRON.

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