

Sauer Denies Leaving Sanoma Independent Media

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Derk Sauer, who founded Independent Media in 1992, is currently chairman of the company's supervisory board. **Igor Tabakov**

Derk Sauer, chairman of Sanoma Independent Media's supervisory board, said Thursday that a report of his exit from Russia's biggest publishing house was "inaccurate" and "premature."

Sauer, who founded Independent Media and The Moscow Times in 1992, denied an assertion in Kommersant newspaper that he had left the company and was close to accepting a position at rival media groups RBK or Zhivi, controlled by billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov's Onexim.

"I have not made any decisions," he said by telephone. "The story in Kommersant is totally premature."

Elena Myasnikova, Sanoma Independent Media's chief executive who replaced Sauer in 2007,

abruptly stepped down earlier this month amid a tussle with the company's Finnish owners. Sauer said at the time that Sanoma had been "chipping away at the authority of local management."

Myasnikova's contract at Sanoma Independent Media expires in mid-October, and she said in e-mailed comments Thursday that she was talking to several companies about her job prospects. But she maintained she had not "signed any papers with anyone yet."

The Kommersant report suggested that she was also looking to join Prokhorov's team.

Sauer said he had been "approached by many [potential employers] inside and outside of Russia" in recent weeks.

Independent Media was bought by Finnish-based international media holding Sanoma in 2005. Sanoma Independent Media is the parent company of The Moscow Times and about 50 other publications.

Sauer, whose contract expires on Dec. 31, declined to comment in detail on the sticking points of his negotiations with Sanoma. "For me the most important thing is the well-being and future of the company and particularly The Moscow Times," he said.

Sauer has been invited to a meeting with Sanoma executives in Helsinki in mid-October and will determine his future with the company after that, he said.

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