

Putin Gives Depardieu Russian Citizenship

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Gerard Depardieu

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday bestowed Russian citizenship on French actor Gerard Depardieu, who has been protesting attempts by France's Socialist government to raise taxes on the rich.

A brief [decree](#) posted on the Kremlin website said Putin honored Depardieu's application for citizenship.

At his Dec. 20 press conference, when fielding a question about reports that Depardieu was seeking a Russian passport, Putin said that Depardieu hadn't applied but would get one for the asking.

"If Gerard really wants to have a residence permit or Russian passport, we will consider it a done deal," Putin said.

He added that his understanding was that Depardieu continued to consider himself a Frenchman. "He loves his country, its culture. It's his life," he said.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, also last month, invited Depardieu to become a Russian, saying the government was intent on keeping its flat 13-percent income tax, one of the lowest rates in Europe.

A star of the movie "Green Card," Depardieu bought a house in Belgium, just over the border from France, put up his sumptuous Parisian home for sale, and said he was ready to forego his nationality after French President Francois Hollande moved to introduce 75 percent tax on annual income above 1 million euros (\$1.32 million).

France's Constitutional Council on Dec. 29 rejected the measure that was due to take effect this month as an effort to make the rich contribute more to cutting the public deficit. Depardieu said in a statement afterward that the decision "changed nothing" for him.

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