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Timchenko Knighted by France

By The Moscow Times

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Billionaire Gennady Timchenko has received the Knight of the Legion of Honor title, one of France's highest awards, according to a statement by the French-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The title rewards Timchenko's "outstanding contribution ... to the implementation of large French-Russian economic projects," such as creating strategic partnership with French oil and gas giant Total to develop gas-condensate fields in the Yamal peninsula, as well as his work as chairman of the CCIFR's Economic Council of French and Russian Businesses, Thursday's statement said.

The chamber also praised the businessman's initiative to promote an agreement between Russia and the Louvre on establishing a permanent exhibition of Russian art in the museum. Timchenko also supported the Russian museum in St. Petersburg to help it preserve the country's cultural heritage and the Alekhine Memorial International Chess Tournament, which was carried out in Russia and France in April.

Timchenko, who co-owns oil trader Gunvor and gas producer Novatek, ranks 9th in the Forbes Magazine list of Russian billionaires, with a fortune of over $14 billion.

Having received the award, he joined the pleiad of Russian businessmen and cultural and scientific figures who have received the same title. The list includes AvtoVAZ CEO Igor Komarov, Onexim owner Mikhail Prokhorov, film director Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky and sculptor Zurab Tsereteli. In 2006, President Vladimir Putin was also awarded the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor — the highest degree of the five-degree order.

The Order of the Legion of Honor was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802.

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