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Rosneft Declines to Publish Required Income Declarations

By Allison Quinn

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Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin.

Rosneft head Igor Sechin, widely considered Russia's highest paid executive, has managed to avoid publishing an income declaration for 2013 as part of the government's fight against corruption, business daily Vedomosti reported Monday.

The publication of income declarations of employees at state companies was made a requirement by a presidential decree in July 2013. The move was part of a wider effort to crack down on corruption that also included the establishment of a special department to oversee the work of verifying officials' income and expense declarations.

Perhaps in a sign of how serious the government was taking the new anti-corruption efforts, the required income declarations contain information not only on the executives' earnings, but those of their spouse and children as well.

Rosneft explained its refusal to publish income declarations for its executives by the fact that, though Rosneft is state-run, the company was not set up by federal law — one of the conditions set out in last year's presidential decree, the paper reported.

Vedomosti cited a company spokesman as saying that all information on executives' incomes had been submitted to "the competent authorities in the timeframe and volume" required by the government.

Rosneft, Russia's biggest oil company, was not the only state corporation to refrain from publishing income declarations, however. Gazprom, Rosneftegaz, Russian Railways, Aeroflot, Rushydro and Inter RAO also held out on publishing such information as well, Vedomosti reported.

Requests sent to Russian Railways and Gazprom over the income declarations went unanswered, Vedomosti reported. Spokesmen from Rushydro and Inter RAO declined to comment on the matter, according to the paper.

Sechin has frequently come under fire from journalists and activists over what many consider to be a ludicrously high salary, which Forbes estimated at $50 million last year.

In response to Rosneft's refusal to publish income declarations on Monday, opposition activist Alexei Navalny — one of the most outspoken critics of the lavish lifestyles of many top executives — mocked Sechin on his blog.

"The award for the best way out from a complex situation, without a doubt, goes to state businessman Igor Sechin," Navalny wrote on his blog Monday.

Sechin, for his part, recently lashed out over feverish speculation over his income, filing a lawsuit in May against the Russian edition of Forbes for dubbing him the "highest-paid executive in Russia."

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