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Putin Awards Order of Honor to Killed Total CEO De Margerie

By The Moscow Times

November 03, 2014



Christophe de Margerie, CEO of the French oil and gas company Total SA, speaks during an interview with Reuters on the eve of an oil summit in Paris, in this May 2, 2012 file picture.

President Vladimir Putin has awarded a posthumous Order of Honor to Christophe de Margerie, chief executive of France's Total oil company, killed when a business jet collided with a snowplow during takeoff at a Moscow airport in October.

The order was granted for de Margerie's "major contribution to Russian-French economic and cultural relations," the Kremlin said in a statement on Saturday.

De Margerie was a strong opponent of Western economic sanctions against Russia over its actions in Ukraine, while his good relationship with political leaders was considered one of the main strengths of the charismatic and outspoken manager.

Putin had a close working relationship with de Margerie, his spokesman said sending

the president's condolences on Oct. 21.

After the tragedy, Total, the world's fourth largest oil company, appointed refining boss Patrick Pouyanne as the new chief executive.

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