

Rosneft Defends Medal for 'Grown Man' Ivan Sechin

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Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin

Oil major Rosneft has defended the son of company CEO Igor Sechin, who earlier this week was awarded a state medal for "longstanding" service to Russia's energy sector — at the ripe old age of 25.

"If he was 16 ... then that would be surprising. But at the age of 25, [Ivan Sechin] is already a grown man," Rosneft spokesman Mikhail Leontyev told radio station Moskva Govorit on Thursday.

Ivan Sechin, who serves as a deputy director of a Rosneft department focusing on joint shelf projects, was awarded the "longstanding" service medal by President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, according to a decree published on the government's website.

The young oil executive was among the recipients of the Order for Service to the Fatherland

honored for their "substantial contribution to the development of the fuel and energy sector and longstanding conscientious labor," according to the decree.

But the award was heavily criticized in some quarters, with opposition leader and prominent anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny calling it a "mockery."

"What could a 25-year-old good-for-nothing, working since March 2014 (less than a year) in his daddy's business, possibly offer that is longstanding and worthy?" Navalny wrote in a post on his website.

Ivan Sechin's father, Igor Sechin, is a close ally of Putin and is among those to have been sanctioned by the United States over Moscow's policy on Ukraine.

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