

Russian Crooner Kobzon to Undergo Surgery in Italy

September 02, 2015



Iosif Kobzon

Iconic Russian crooner and longtime State Duma Deputy Iosif Kobzon, known for his eager support of the annexation of Crimea and anti-Western rhetoric, will undergo surgery in Italy, Russian media reported Wednesday. The country has issued him a visa that allows him to enter and stay in Italy for medical purposes.

In February, Kobzon, 77, was banned from entering the European Union under sanctions imposed on Russia over its role in the Ukraine crisis.

He has been suffering from prostate cancer for more than seven years and sparked outrage last month when he said that Russian President Vladimir Putin would help lift his travel ban, thus allowing Kobzon to receive treatment in Europe.

Because he helped pass a politically motivated law in 2012 that banned the adoption of Russian orphans by U.S. families, and thus denied many children the chance to receive medical treatment abroad, commentators accused Kobzon of hypocrisy, saying he should

enjoy Russian health care as ordinary people do.

Last week the singer announced that he had obtained a Schengen visa thanks to Putin interceding on his behalf.

Russian officialdom is known to have a friendly relationship with the Italian ruling elite. Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is a friend of Putin, and the current government is frequently vocal in its sympathies for Russia.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/09/02/russian-crooner-kobzon-to-undergo-surgery-in-italy-a49291>