

Russian Tycoon-Turned-Dissident Khodorkovsky Patents Surname

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Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former oil tycoon who spent 10 years in jail, has been granted a patent on his last name by Russia's trademark body Rospatent, a news report said.

Rospatent licensed the word “Khodorkovsky” in Cyrillic in April and its English-language transliteration in June, the Kommersant newspaper reported Wednesday, citing the agency.

The patent request was first filed in March 2013 by the British Virgin Islands-based company MBK IP Limited, the legal entity behind Khodorkovsky's foundation and personal website, when Khodorkovsky was still behind bars on charges of tax evasion and fraud in what critics say was a politically motivated case.

The English and Russian spellings of Khodorkovsky's name have now been trademarked as brands for more than 150 potential goods and services, ranging from political foundations and real estate to clothing items, the report said.

Representatives for the former head of the now-defunct Yukos oil concern refused to disclose their plans for the brand, but legal experts told Kommersant the name was most likely patented to prevent its usage by third parties.

With its inclusion in Rospatent's database, the English spelling of "Khodorkovsky" has been trademarked in nine countries, including Switzerland, Norway and several former Soviet countries, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization's online records.

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Russian investigators in June named Khodorkovsky as a suspect in a murder case in what critics say is revenge for an international arbitration court ruling that ordered Russia to pay \$50 billion for expropriating Yukos' assets.

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