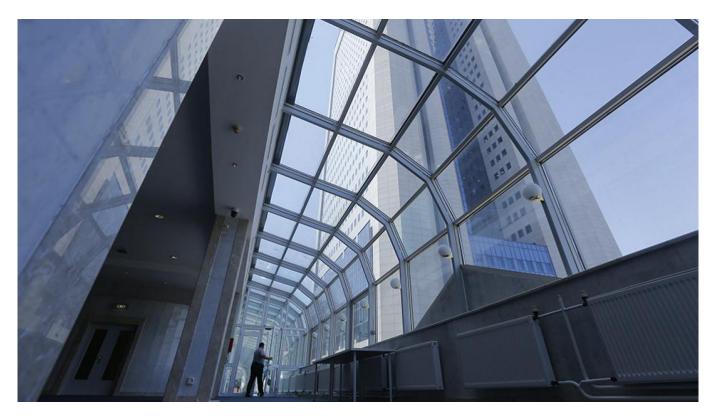


Putin's Relative Nominated to Board of Russian Energy Giant Gazprom

By Reuters

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A general view of Gazprom main office in Moscow Maxim Shemetov / Reuters

A relative of Russian President Vladimir Putin has been nominated for a senior position in the state-owned gas giant Gazprom.

In a brief financial disclosure on Thursday, Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas producer, said its board would consider the issue "of M.E. Putin", without giving further details.

The formulation is usually used by Gazprom in reference to a discussion about nominating a new management board member, or removing an existing board member. There is currently no one called Putin on the board.

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, confirmed that it did concern a relative of Putin.

"As far as I know, he is a distant relative of the president. I don't know if they have any

interaction," Peskov told a daily conference call with journalists.

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Mikhail Putin is a son of the president's cousin, the Interfax news agency reported. Gazprom declined to comment on his possible position in the company.

Gazprom has a vacancy on its management board after Alexander Kozlov, who was in charge of the company's logistics and procurement, died last December aged 65.

Mikhail Putin has been on the management board of insurance company Sogaz, the main insurer of Gazprom, since 2008.

Information about the president's family is closely guarded from the public eye by Putin, a former head of Russia's FSB secret service. He keeps his two daughters, Maria and Katerina, as well as his grandchildren, away from exposure to the media.

Putin has said he wants them to lead normal lives.

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