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Influential Russian Newspaper Editor at Kommersant Resigns

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Sergei Yakovlev **Mikhail Metsel / TASS**

The editor-in-chief of Russia's influential Kommersant business daily has resigned and will take a year-long sabbatical for what the outlet said were personal reasons.

Sergei Yakovlev, who came in as literary editor for Kommersant Publishing House in 1997, took over as chief editor in 2014 amid shakeups that dramatically reshaped Russia's media landscape. The paper was owned by the late tycoon and Kremlin insider turned self-exiled Putin critic Boris Berezovsky from 1997 to 2006, then purchased by government-friendly tycoon Alisher Usmanov.

Kommersant said Thursday that Yakovlev was "going on a long leave of absence for personal reasons."

"I'm confident that you will continue to receive information you can trust in our publications, on our radio and website," Yakovlev, 47, wrote in a public address to readers.

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Yakovlev's year-long sabbatical begins Monday, July 16, Russia's Meduza news website reported on its Telegram channel.

An anonymous source quoted by Meduza said there were discussions about dismissing Yakovlev within Kommersant for the past year.

Yakovlev's replacement was named Vladimir Zhelonkin, the former head of Defense Ministry-owned Zvezda media group and head of Kommersant's publishing house since 2016.

The anonymous source told Meduza that Zhelonkin is being brought in to carry out a "clean-up and staff cuts," after which a new editor-in-chief would be named.

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