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# Legendary Soviet Crooner and Lawmaker Iosif Kobzon Dies

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**Iosif Kobzon (Yelena Nikitchenko / TASS)**

Iosif Kobzon, the legendary Soviet crooner who served in the Russian State Duma in his later years, died at the age of 80 on Thursday after a 13-year battle with prostate cancer.

Known as Russia's Frank Sinatra, Kobzon won widespread fame for performing the theme songs of the classic 1973 television spy series "17 Moments of Spring."

**Embed:**

Kobzon became a controversial figure as a Duma lawmaker for his support of the 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula and other pro-Kremlin stances. He has been barred entry to the United States since 1995 when his visa was revoked on suspected mafia ties.

In 2015, the European Union blacklisted Kobzon for visiting the war-ravaged region of eastern Ukraine where he was born and expressing support for pro-Russian separatists.

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The Duma hailed Kobzon for his "inexhaustible energy and efficiency."

"As a deputy, he earned the trust and love of the people thanks to his sensitivity toward their problems and a desire to help," the lower chamber of parliament said in an obituary.

Kobzon is survived by his wife, a son and daughter, and 10 grandchildren.

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