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St. Petersburg's Lakhta Center Named 'Skyscraper of the Year'

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The Lakhta Center is the first Russian building to receive the Emporis Skyscraper Award. **Svetlana Kholyavchuk / TASS**

The Lakhta Center skyscraper in St. Petersburg has received the Emporis Skyscraper Award, becoming the first structure in Russia to win the prize in its 20-year history.

The 462-meter Lakhta Center, which has been Europe's tallest skyscraper and the 15th-tallest in the world since its completion in 2018, is the headquarters of Russia's Gazprom gas giant along with its oil subsidiary, Gazprom Neft.

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The 2019 Emporis Skyscraper Award's jury said the tower in northern St. Petersburg scored points with its unique shape that resembles a flame.

"The twist creates a dynamic impression, giving the building the shape of a blazing flame,

which resembles the logo of Gazprom," German real estate data mining company Emporis said in its announcement Tuesday.

The jury also pointed to the Lakhta Center's use of "environmentally friendly and energy-efficient technologies."

"As the northernmost supertall skyscraper in the world, the building is exposed to extreme temperatures," the statement said. "A double skin facade prevents unnecessary heat loss and makes it extraordinarily energy efficient. In addition, thanks to the innovative use of infrared radiators, excess heat is not lost but fed back into the system."

Beijing's Leeza SOHO skyscraper took second place, while New York's 35 Hudson Yards came in third.

The 87-story, $1.77 billion Lakhta Center has driven discontent among St. Petersburg residents in the years since the project was first approved, with locals protesting to preserve the city's historic skyline and its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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