The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

UEFA Strips St. Petersburg of Champions League Final

February 25, 2022



UEFA Europa League play-offs between Zenit St Petersburg and Real Betis Seville at Gazprom Arena.
Alexander Demianchuk / TASS

St. Petersburg has been stripped of the Champions League Final following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, UEFA said Friday.

The final, set for May 2022, will instead be staged at the Stade de France in Paris, UEFA's Executive Committee said in a statement issued after an extraordinary meeting held "following the grave escalation of the security situation in Europe."

Russian and Ukrainian teams competing in European competitions will also be required to play their home matches at neutral venues, the football government body said.

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Russia's Gazprom is a major backer of UEFA through headline sponsorship packages for its

flagship club and international competitions.

UEFA has come under pressure for its connections to the Russian gas giant and been criticized by European politicians for its reliance on Russian sponsorship following President Vladimir Putin's decision to invade neighboring Ukraine.

UEFA also said it was working to help ensure the "rescue for football players and their families in Ukraine who face dire human suffering, destruction and displacement."

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