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Investigation Links German Ex-Ballet Director Zelensky with Putin's Daughter

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Igor Zelensky. **staatsoper.de**

A new investigation has named the former director of the Bavarian State Ballet as the partner of Russian President Vladimir Putin's second-eldest daughter.

Igor Zelensky, 52, is reportedly in a serious, long-term relationship with Katerina Tikhonova, 35, widely believed to be Putin's daughter, Russian news outlet iStories and German news site Der Spiegel reported Thursday.

Tikhonova and Zelensky are also said to have a daughter who was born in 2017, around the time when Tikhonova reportedly divorced sanctioned business executive Kirill Shamalov.

iStories based its investigation on flight logs obtained from sources at Moscow's Vnukovo airport, as well as emails from Russia's presidential security service detailing the family's relocation to Germany.

The flight logs reportedly identify Tikhonova, Zelensky and their daughter arriving on the

same 2019 Munich-Moscow charter flight with a host of nannies and bodyguards.

The outlet also said it obtained an email received by a presidential security guard in October 2019 with the subject line "Moving to Germany."

In all, iStories claimed it had data on more than 50 flights taken by Tikhonova between Moscow and Munich from 2017-2019. The outlet also said it had scanned copies of passports belonging to Tikhonova, Zelensky and their unnamed daughter.

Zelensky retired from the Bavarian State Ballet in April, citing "private family circumstances." The decision, however, also came shortly after he was summoned to Germany's Science and Arts Ministry to explain his ties to Russia's state-linked cultural heritage foundation.

Serge Dorny, the ballet's artistic director, later admitted in an off-guard conversation with notorious Russian prank callers Vovan and Lexus that Zelensky "didn't make that decision on his own."

"We had a conversation, and I brought him to this conclusion," Dorny said.

iStories also quoted an unnamed source at the Bavarian State Ballet confirming that Zelensky is "most likely the partner of Putin's daughter."

Neither Zelensky nor Tikhonova could be reached for comment.

Not much is officially known about Putin's family aside from that he has two daughters with his ex-wife, Lyudmila.

The Kremlin has sought to keep information about the women — as well as their families and purported connections to major Russian businesses — out of the public domain, citing "security reasons."

Independent Russian and international media have named the two women as Katerina Tikhonova, a tech executive and acrobatic rock-and-roll dancer, and Maria Vorontsova, who leads state-funded genetics research programs.

Both women have been sanctioned by the United States and the European Union in recent weeks in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

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