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20 Russian Billionaires Challenge EU Sanctions in Court – Bloomberg

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Dmitry Konov. **Natalia Gorshkova / Kommersant**

At least 20 Russian billionaires have launched legal challenges against European Union sanctions imposed after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Bloomberg reported Wednesday.

More than 1,000 Russian individuals, including President Vladimir Putin, are on the EU sanctions list, which sees them hit by travel bans and asset freezes.

Former Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich, industrialist Andrei Melnichenko, banker Mikhail Fridman and petrochemical tycoon Dmitry Konov are some of the sanctioned oligarchs to lodge complaints in EU courts.

"The vast majority of cases will have very limited prospects of success," Irish trial lawyer Carsten Zatschler told Bloomberg.

"So much political judgment is involved in the underlying decisions."

Russian business leaders face a narrow window of just over two months to prepare an appeal

in the EU, Bloomberg reported.

They also face difficulties finding legal representation as "a lot of law firms are avoiding any case associated in any way with Russia since the invasion," Zatschler said.

Even in the slim chance of a favorable court ruling, the EU can also "re-designate" individuals by submitting new arguments for their inclusion on sanction lists.

For many, the case of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych illustrates the difficulty of escaping EU sanctions, Bloomberg reported.

The exiled pro-Russian leader has won almost every challenge against EU sanctions since he was first targeted by the bloc in 2014, only to be re-designated again in a cat-and-mouse game that reportedly involved nine separate appeals.

Bloomberg reported that EU courts had on rare occasions suspended sanctions measures and allowed the targeted individuals to sue for damages years later.

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