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Ex-Austrian Minister Who Danced With Putin Rents Summer Home in Russian Village

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Former Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl. **Vladimir Smirnov / TASS Photo Host Agency**

A former Austrian foreign minister who danced with Russian President Vladimir Putin at her wedding has been residing in a Russian village this summer, local media reported Tuesday.

Karin Kneissl made headlines in 2018 when Putin attended her wedding at an Austrian vineyard, where both were photographed waltzing arm-in-arm.

Kneissl revealed in an interview with Russian media that she has been renting a summer home in the Ryazan region village of Petrushovo, some 350 kilometers southeast of Moscow.

"I have it booked for another month, then we'll see what happens," Kneissl told the Vidsboku online news website without disclosing how long she has been staying at Petrushovo.

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“When I look [at] chickens, ducks, goats in the street — this is my world too because I lived in a small village in Austria,” she said at a local event, speaking in Russian.

Kneissl’s recently registered channel on the messaging app Telegram contains photographs of ponies, cats and chicken, though she does not specify where the pictures were taken.

Kneissl served as Austrian foreign minister in 2017-19 and joined the board of Russian oil giant Rosneft as an independent director in 2021. She quit the Rosneft board in May 2022 after Russia invaded Ukraine.

But in a sign of her deepening ties with Russia, Kneissl is listed as the director of the Geopolitical Observatory for Russia’s Key Issues, a research center at St. Petersburg University. The center was established earlier in March with the aim of “finding solutions to the challenges of global development and Russia’s policy objectives.”

Kneissl’s personal website says she left her home country in September 2020 due to death threats and a “de facto ban on working in Austria.” She had been living on a small farm in France, as well as in northern Lebanon, before temporarily settling in Russia.

Asked about whether she maintains ties with Putin, Kneissl told Vidsboku that she last saw the Russian leader in 2019.

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