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Navalny Allies Call for EU Sanctions Against Rock Star Who Performed in Occupied Ukraine

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Andrey Nikerichev / Moskva Agency

Allies of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny have urged the EU to impose sanctions on a Russian rock star who stirred controversy for visiting Russian troops in occupied Ukraine.

Roman Bilyk, who performs under the stage name Roma Zver with the hit group Zveri, was filmed playing for Russian troops in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region earlier in August.

Around the same time, online users noted the disappearance of social media posts by Bilyk his band where they had previously called for an end to the war in Ukraine.

Navalny's associate Maria Pevchikh said she had petitioned the relevant EU authorities to include Bilyk on its list of sanctions as the owner of EU property.

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War Posts

Spanish registration documents shared by Pevchikh showed Roman Bilyk as the buyer of a small villa in the Spanish island resort of Tenerife in April 2019.

Investigators from Navalny's YouTube channel estimate that similar villas in the same neighborhood cost around 500,000 euros ($540,000).

"The potential loss of the right to visit Europe and live there is the smallest consequence for Roma Zver's [Bilyk's] decision to support Putin in the second year of the war," Pevchikh said.

Navalny's team said it was also adding Bilyk to its own list of nearly 7,400 Russian figures who they say should come under sanctions for enabling the invasion of Ukraine.

Anti-war figures were quick to condemn Bilyk for reversing his once-anti-war position, with many suggesting that he and Zveri were forced to compromise in order to continue their musical careers.

The band's shows in Russia, including a high-profile gig at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June, had been repeatedly canceled.

A number of prominent Russian cultural figures who publically oppose Moscow's invasion of Ukraine have faced backlash, including show cancellations.

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