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EU Court Rejects Abramovich's Appeal to Lift Sanctions

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Roman Abramovich. **Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

A European Union court has dismissed Russian tycoon Roman Abramovich's challenge to remove war-related sanctions against him, the Court of Justice of the EU said Wednesday.

The EU included Abramovich in its sanctions list in March 2022, one month after Russia invaded Ukraine, for his alleged ties to President Vladimir Putin and contributions to Russia's war budget as a majority shareholder of the steel giant Evraz.

"The [European] Council did not in fact err in its assessment by deciding to include then maintain Mr. Abramovich's name on the lists," the General Court of the European Union said in a statement.

Abramovich, who holds Russian, Israeli and Portuguese citizenship, has denied financial ties to the Kremlin.

The 57-year-old former Chelsea Football Club owner, whose net worth is estimated by Forbes

at $9.2 billion, has been sanctioned by the EU, British and Canada — but not the United States.

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The U.S. Justice Department in 2022 seized two of Abramovich's aircraft, saying they had been used in violation of anti-Russian sanctions over Ukraine.

Abramovich's challenge in the EU court also included a demand for 1 million euros in compensation for damages to his reputation.

The EU court dismissed that claim as well, saying Abramovich "has failed to demonstrate that the inclusion and maintenance of his name on the lists were unlawful."

Abramovich expressed disappointment in the ruling, which he said was based "purely on the court defining Mr. Abramovich as a 'Russian businessman'," according to a statement issued on his behalf that was shared with Reuters.

"[Abramovich's Russian affiliation] under today's very broad EU regulations is sufficient to remain sanctioned, even if you are just a passive shareholder in a business sector with no connection to the war," the statement said.

It argued that Abramoich "does not have the ability to influence the decision-making of any government, including Russia, and has in no way benefited from the war."

Abramovich was filmed participating in Russia-Ukraine peace talks in the spring of 2022 that ultimately failed.

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