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Billionaire Usmanov Wins Court Battle Against Forbes Over Article Claiming Ties With Putin – RBC

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Alisher Usmanov. **Alexei Nikolsky / TASS**

A court in Germany has banned the U.S. edition of Forbes magazine from claiming that Russian-Uzbek billionaire Alisher Usmanov has close ties to President Vladimir Putin, the RBC news website reported Tuesday, citing an obtained copy of the ruling.

Forbes, citing an anonymous expert, reported in early February 2022 that Usmanov "has repeatedly fronted for Putin and solved his business problems."

The European Council cited the Forbes article later that month when slapping war-related sanctions against the businessman, including a travel ban and asset freeze.

In February 2023, Usmanov challenged the allegations by filing a lawsuit against Forbes with Hamburg's District Court, according to RBC.

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Citing court documents, the outlet reported that Forbes was unable to provide examples of Usmanov's business dealings on Putin's behalf and refused to reveal the identity of the expert attributed in its article.

The Hamburg District Court ruled that Forbes can no longer disseminate the published claims, according to RBC.

Usmanov's attorney Joachim Nikolaus Steinhofel described the EU sanctions based on the Forbes article as a "complete institutional failure" that laid the groundwork for "the witch-hunt against Mr. Usmanov."

"Turns out the EU council justifies sanctions with fake news," he wrote on X (formerly Twitter) Tuesday.

The Moscow Times was unable to independently verify RBC's report.

The excerpt on Usmanov's ties with Putin in the Forbes article — titled "Meet Putin's Oligarchs Most Likely to Get Slapped With Sanctions by Biden Over Ukraine" — was still accessible as of Tuesday evening.

Forbes values Usmanov's net worth at $14.4 billion.

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