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Anti-War Historian Fired From St. Petersburg's European University

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Ivan Kurilla. **IvanA (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Updated with RBC's report.

A prominent Russian historian who openly opposed Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has been fired from his teaching position at the European University in St. Petersburg over alleged "absenteeism."

"Today, the European University dismissed me for absenteeism," historian Ivan Kurilla wrote Monday in a private Facebook post, a screenshot of which The Moscow Times obtained.

According to Kurilla, who studies Russian-American relations, he had arranged to go on a sabbatical starting Jan. 12, but the university's rector at the last moment refused to sign documents approving the academic leave.

"I don't know whether the rector is simply playing it safe in his decision to dismiss me, or whether this is a demand from the outside," the historian added, suggesting that the

authorities may have pressured the university to dismiss him over an open letter against the war that he signed in 2022.

The European University later told the RBC news outlet that Kurilla planned to work at a U.S.-based university during his sabbatical, which conflicted with the terms of his paid academic leave.

According to the university, he was given the option to either turn down the position at the American university or forgo his sabbatical.

“The parties discussed possible ways to terminate [Kurilla’s] employment contract on the terms of compensation, but did not reach an agreement,” European University's press service was quoted as saying by RBC.

“The university viewed the financial demands of I.I. Kurilla to be excessive.”

In the private Facebook post where he announced his dismissal from the European University, the historian said he was looking for a new job.

Kurilla is among hundreds of Russians whose names were found in a leaked government list of “potential foreign agents” last year.

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