

Ukraine Cannot Trademark Phrase 'Russian Warship, Go F*** Yourself,' EU Court Says

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A billboard reading "Russian warship, go f*** yourself" in Zaporizhzhia. **Ed JONES / AFP**

An EU court [ruled](#) Wednesday that Ukraine cannot trademark the phrase "Russian warship, go f*** yourself," ending a two-year dispute over intellectual property rights to the viral slogan.

Ukraine's border guard service filed a trademark application on March 16, 2022, three weeks after a Ukrainian soldier uttered the defiant phrase during a radio exchange with a Russian warship on the first day of Moscow's full-scale invasion.

Kyiv argues it should hold sole authorship of the phrase — which became a symbol of Ukraine's resistance against invading Russian forces — to prevent others from profiting from the various commercial products that feature it.

The European Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in Spain had previously rejected the Ukrainian border guard service's application, [claiming](#) the trademark uses "vulgar language

with an insulting sexual connotation” and would constitute immoral war profiteering.

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On Wednesday, the European Union’s General Court in Luxembourg upheld the rejection on the basis that the Ukrainian rallying cry is a “political slogan.”

“Whilst the applicant submits that the phrase [is] an expressive reaction to an imminent threat of mortal danger, the fact remains that, directly after the event which gave rise to that reaction, that phrase became a political slogan,” the latest decision states.

The phrase originated on Feb. 24, 2022, when a Ukrainian border guard used it during Russia’s capture of Snake Island. The Ukrainian soldiers stationed there were taken prisoner but were later exchanged in a prisoner swap, and Ukrainian forces retook the island in June 2022.

A protester in Russia was [fined](#) this summer over his tattoo that features the phrase.

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