

# Hungary Seeking to Lift EU Sanctions From Russian Billionaires – Systema

February 26, 2025



Billionaire Alisher Usmanov. © [Marie-Lan Nguyen \(CC BY 3.0\)](#)

Hungary is pushing to remove seven Russian billionaires and one federal minister from the EU's sanctions list before agreeing to extend sanctions over Russia's war in Ukraine, the investigative news outlet [Systema](#) [reported](#) Wednesday, citing two anonymous EU officials.

Reuters previously [reported](#) that Hungary had demanded the lifting of EU travel bans and asset freezes on eight Russians but did not identify them by name.

According to Systema, an affiliate of the U.S.-funded news organization Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, billionaires Alisher Usmanov, Mikhail Fridman and Petr Aven are among those on the list presented by Hungarian officials. Russian Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyarev is also listed.

Seven of the eight individuals, besides Degtyarev, had previously challenged the sanctions in EU courts.

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The EU must renew its two sets of sanctions on Russia — including measures targeting more than 2,400 individuals and entities, as well as a separate framework of economic restrictions — every six months through a unanimous vote.

Last month, Hungary delayed the renewal of economic sanctions until the European Commission agreed to include Budapest in discussions on resuming gas transit into the EU via Ukraine.

Hungary, which shares relatively warm relations with Russia, has repeatedly used sanctions renewal votes as leverage.

Reuters reported Tuesday that Hungary is also seeking fresh guarantees on Ukraine gas transit talks ahead of the next renewal vote.

Ukraine allowed a gas transit agreement with Russia to lapse on Jan. 1 in an effort to deprive Moscow of revenues used to fund the war.

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