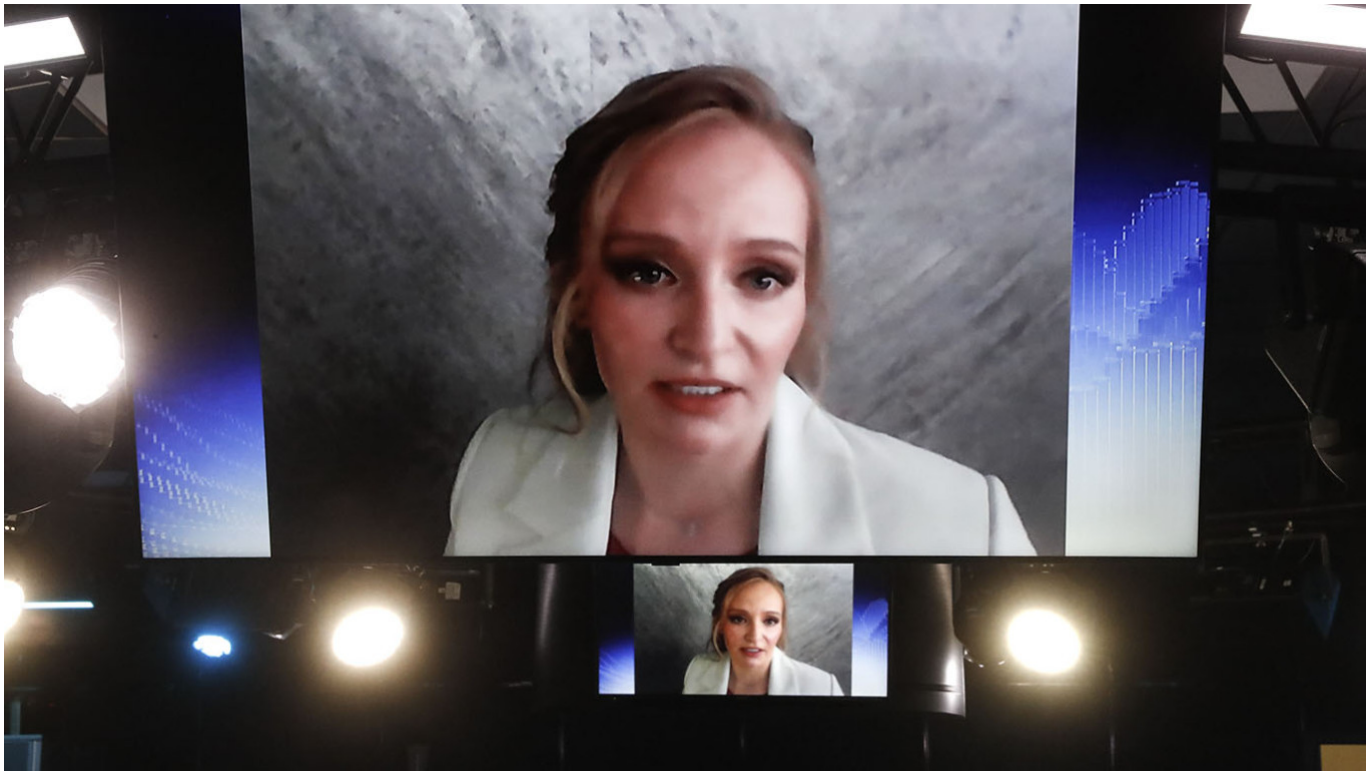
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Fund Linked to Putin's Daughter Invests in Tech Firm as Kremlin Targets Foreign Platforms

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Katerina Tikhonova **Anatoly Maltsev / EPA / TASS**

A technology fund connected to President Vladimir Putin's alleged daughter has acquired a stake in a Russian company developing alternatives to Western videoconferencing platforms amid a Kremlin push to curb foreign digital services operating in the country.

IVA Technologies, which markets its communications software as a Russian substitute for Microsoft Teams and Zoom, announced this week that the Technology Investment Fund, co-founded by Katerina Tikhonova, widely believed to be Putin's daughter, has purchased a 1% stake in the company.

The financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The Technology Investment Fund, which focuses on seed investments in Russian tech startups, was launched by Tikhonova and her deputy, Natalia Popova.

Tikhonova, a former acrobatic dancer, heads the state-linked scientific development foundation InnoPraktika.

IVA Technologies' core product, IVA MCU/Connect, is included in Russia's national software registry and is marketed as a domestic alternative to popular Western platforms. The company is also developing email, calendar and artificial intelligence tools, including voice assistants and chatbots.

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The investment follows public support from Putin for restricting foreign digital services.

During a Kremlin meeting with business leaders in May, IVA Technologies' CEO Stanislav Iodkovsky complained directly to the Russian president that domestic developers were "losing billions" because companies like Zoom and Microsoft had not fully withdrawn from the Russian market.

Putin endorsed Iodkovsky's position, saying these companies should be "strangled" and ordering officials to compile a list of major Russian companies still using foreign software. He also said his proposal would help eliminate what he described as Russians' "bad habit" of relying on foreign software and digital services.

While IVA MCU/Connect is touted as a homegrown replacement for platforms like Microsoft Teams and Zoom, users report that it still faces technical issues, independent business outlet The Bell noted.

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