

Slovak outlet Denník N republishes numerous false allegations about Alisher Usmanov that courts have already held to be unlawful

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On 11 March 2026, the Slovak news outlet Denník N published an article concerning the alleged efforts of the Slovak government to secure the removal of two Russian nationals from the EU sanctions list. The article contained an extensive passage concerning our client, Mr Alisher Burkhanovich Usmanov.

By letter dated 12 March 2026, Denník N was requested, in order to avoid court proceedings, to provide a cease-and-desist undertaking backed by a contractual penalty.

“The article was published on the eve of the European Commission’s decision on the extension of the sanctions. It reads as if its authors had taken particular care to assemble, in a single piece, every factual allegation that courts have previously found to be unlawful,” said Mr Usmanov’s lawyer, Joachim Nikolaus Steinhöfel.

The article contained a dozen such statements about Alisher Usmanov, even though these very allegations have for years been prohibited, retracted, deleted or corrected in one case after another. The Regional Court of Hamburg has prohibited corresponding statements, inter alia, in proceedings against *Kurier*, Forbes Media LLC, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Der Tagesspiegel* and RTL. Cease-and-desist undertakings backed by contractual penalties have been signed, among others, by *Il Tempo*, *Wiener Zeitung*, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, *WirtschaftsWoche* and *Basler Zeitung*, as well as many others. Further retractions, corrections or rights of reply were issued by *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera* and OCCRP. In total, from 2023 to 2025, 18 court decisions and injunctions and 102 cease-and-desist declarations from media outlets worldwide were secured on behalf of Mr. Usmanov and members of his family, resulting in the removal of hundreds of false articles and links, and corrections to more than 2,000 publications overall.

“Anyone who republishes the same allegations under these circumstances is not engaging in genuine journalistic inquiry, but demonstrating serious journalistic negligence,” Steinhöfel added.

If, according to media reports, the European Union is currently reviewing the legal sustainability of sanctions imposed on another EU citizen, it cannot discriminate against Mr Usmanov and proceed as though the numerous court rulings rendered in his favour by European courts were of no relevance. Numerous publications underlying the sanctions allegations have already been the subject of injunctions, cease-and-desist undertakings, rights of reply and corrections. In particular, the Regional Court of Hamburg’s *Forbes*

decision of January 2024 concerns an allegation that the Council nevertheless adopted unchanged in its reasoning. A state governed by the rule of law damages its own credibility if it ignores such rulings. Mr Usmanov is an honorary citizen of an Italian municipality, *The Sunday Times* listed him in 2021 as the most generous donor in its Giving List, and the criminal investigations conducted against him in Germany were discontinued. The presumption of innocence remains intact. The lifting of the sanctions imposed on him is therefore also a matter of restoring confidence in the rule of law.

Background

From 2023 to 2025, Mr Usmanov prevailed in proceedings against the US magazine *Forbes*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, Austria’s *Kurier*, and major German broadcasters including RTL and ARD/Westdeutscher Rundfunk.

In April 2025, *Münchener Merkur* removed 15 articles concerning Alisher Usmanov. Some of those articles had triggered investigations against Mr Usmanov in Germany and were mentioned in the Council of the European Union’s sanctions dossier concerning him. At the same time, *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung* (NOZ) deleted or revised 36 inaccurate articles, while the Irish publication *EU Reporter* removed 174 links in 58 languages from its website.

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In February 2025, Germany's leading news agency dpa informed its national and international media partners of the withdrawal of a report claiming that Mr Usmanov's sister owned the yacht *Dilbar*. This followed the deletion, after a formal legal warning, of a corresponding statement by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA). Numerous media outlets then removed the content from their websites, including *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Zeit* and *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*, among others. In March 2025, *Tagesschau*, Germany's oldest and most widely watched television news programme, was likewise required to remove similar content from its website.

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