

Gryzlov Tells EU Not to 'Speak Out'

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State Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov advised European lawmakers on Tuesday to “not speak out prematurely” after several called for Russian officials linked to the case against Mikhail Khodorkovsky to be placed on a blacklist and their foreign-based assets to be frozen.

The European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights discussed on Monday the guilty verdict in the second trial of the jailed oil tycoon, who was sentenced on Dec. 30 with his business partner Platon Lebedev to six more years in prison.

The subcommittee criticized the verdict as politically motivated, and a group of lawmakers headed by Estonia's Kristiina Ojuland proposed blacklisting unspecified Russian officials, Kommersant reported.

The subcommittee passed no decision but will ask the European Parliament to discuss a reaction to the Khodorkovsky case at a general session this week.

But Gryzlov said Tuesday that he did not consider the ruling politically motivated and called the criticism premature because the legal proceedings were not completed.

Khodorkovsky and Lebedev have appealed the verdict, and EU lawmakers should not “speak out” until the court considers the appeal, Gryzlov said, Interfax reported.

Ojuland lobbied earlier for the European Parliament to blacklist Russian officials linked to another high-profile case — Sergei Magnitsky, a Hermitage Capital lawyer who died while being held in pretrial detention on charges that his supporters call fabricated. The parliament has made no decision on the proposal.

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