

# On Europe's Orders, Russia Just Paid Millions to Putin's Biggest Foe

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**Pixabay**

Opposition activist Alexei Navalny says he's received 3.4 million rubles (\$53,000) in compensation from Russia's Justice Ministry in connection with a decision by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) regarding the so-called "KirovLes case." Russia's own Supreme Court overturned the verdict on Nov. 16, and the case is set to be retried in Kirov.

"Yesterday, I write about how they haven't paid the money, months after the court order, and this morning the money appears in my bank account," Navalny wrote on his official website.

Navalny had published on his website a copy of the ECHR's payment order.

Earlier, Vadim Kobzev, Navalny's lawyer, told the Interfax news agency that the Leninsky Court in Kirov has scheduled a consideration of the criminal case against Navalny and fellow defendant Pyotr Ofitserov. Kobzev specified that the court intended to examine the case on its merits rather than schedule a preliminary hearing.

The verdict against Navalny and Ofitserov for embezzlement was handed down July 18, 2013. Both were convicted and taken from the courtroom into custody, only to be released on bail shortly after. At the sentencing, their punishment was reduced to fines of 500,000 rubles and a suspended sentence.

The European Court of Human Rights ruled that the Russian court found Navalny and Ofitserov guilty of committing acts that were indistinguishable from legitimate business, making the convictions an "arbitrary interpretation of the law." The ECHR also rejected a Russian motion to appeal the decision.

With the felony conviction overturned, Navalny would be eligible to run for the Russian presidency in 2018, likely facing off against Vladimir Putin, if the latter decides to run for reelection, and if Navalny isn't found guilty on retrial before the election.

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