

Lithuania Moves to Strip Ballerina's Citizenship Over Pro-Putin Remarks – Reports

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Ilze Liepa. vk.com

Lithuania's Interior Ministry has moved to strip a Russian-Lithuanian ballerina of her citizenship after she praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Baltic country's media [reported](#) Monday.

Ilze Liepa is a dual Russian-Lithuanian citizen who performed at the Bolshoi Theatre in the 1980s and 1990s.

The 59-year-old, who received Lithuanian citizenship in 2000, [said](#) during a Russian-language YouTube interview published last November that she was “ashamed” of Western policies toward Moscow, contrasting them with Putin’s “service to the motherland.”

“Ilze Liepa’s public statements are considered to discredit the state,” Lithuania’s Interior Ministry was quoted as saying by the news website Delfi.

The Interior Ministry [asked](#) Lithuania's civilian intelligence agency, the State Security Department, to initiate proceedings for stripping the ballerina of her Lithuanian citizenship, according to Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT).

The Security department was also asked “to check” some 800 naturalized Lithuanians for “threat[s] to national security and support for the actions of the aggressor state [Russia],” LRT said.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania governments — all EU and NATO members — have harshly condemned Russia for its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and are among the most stalwart supporters of taking a hard line against Moscow.

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