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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(5.1.2026)

As a consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine the EU does not engage with Russian public entities, including in the field of culture.

Russian cultural figures under EU sanctions are subject to an EU entry ban and to the freezing of assets in the EU due to actions undermining Ukraine's territorial integrity. The opera singer in question has not been put under the EU's restrictive measures. Press reports indicate that the performance at the Teatro Filarmonico in Verona in January 2026 has been cancelled.

Entry bans can be entered in the Schengen Information System (SIS) based on restrictive measures or a judicial or administrative decision by a Member State. The Commission has no access to the data in the SIS and therefore cannot establish whether there is an alert on a person for refusal of entry and stay.

Russian authorities instrumentalise culture, which in the case of state-controlled cultural and artistic bodies and entities becomes an extended arm of the regime's propaganda. It is for Member States, however, to determine the level of cultural cooperation while ensuring that their national policies conform to the Union's positions as set out in Article 29 of the Treaty on European Union¹ and within the existing EU policies vis-à-vis Russia.

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF.