



## Cop27

🕒 This article is more than 1 month old

# Russian oligarchs and companies under sanctions are among lobbyists at Cop27

**The heavy presence of lobbyists from Moscow suggests Russia is using the climate talks to drum up business**

[Cop27 live - latest news updates](#)

---

---

**Ruth Michaelson and Patrick Greenfield**

Sat 12 Nov 2022 08:10 EST

Russian oligarchs and executives from multiple companies under international sanctions are among the lobbyists currently attending Cop27 in Sharm el-Sheikh.

Among those listed as part of the Russian delegation at the pivotal climate talks are the billionaire and former aluminium magnate Oleg Deripaska, who is under UK sanctions, and the billionaire Andrey Melnichenko, the founder and former board member of the Swiss-headquartered fertiliser company EuroChem Group, who has been targeted with individual sanctions by the European Union; Melnichencko has [disputed](#) the sanctions, calling them “absurd and nonsensical”.

The **Gas** giant Gazprom has sent six delegates to the talks, alongside the managing director of Sberbank. Both are under US and EU sanctions. Representatives from the oil company Lukoil, the mining company Severstal, and Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works are also in attendance, all of which are under US sanctions.

The Oil and gas company Tatneft, currently sanctioned by the EU, sent three lobbyists to the climate talks, according to data compiled by the organisations Corporate Accountability, Global Witness and Corporate **Europe** Observatory. The provisional Russian delegation includes the metallurgical companies Severstal and NLMK Group, part of an industry that has faced sanctions by the EU.

The **Cop27** climate talks have been coloured in large part by debates about how the world should adapt to a shortage of Russian gas supplies. This follows months of fears in Europe around energy shortages stemming from Moscow's decision to abruptly halt gas supplies to Europe, in response to international sanctions because of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February.

As delegates gathered in the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, environmental groups, scientists and representatives from the global south voiced fears that Europe's energy crisis could be used as a pretext for further gas exploration in Africa, rather than a push to increase renewable energy resources worldwide.

The presence of industry lobbyists and oil and gas industry executives, including six representatives from the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, a lobby group, suggests Russia is using the crucial climate talks to drum up business.

It also suggests the Russian delegation may be looking to promote unsanctioned industries, like some metals and fertiliser, which are tied up with Russia's impact on global food supplies and the rising cost of food products, particularly in the global south.

Russia is the world's **fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases** and **third-largest supplier of oil**, behind the US and Saudi Arabia, with a troubled environmental record that includes a decade of drilling in the Arctic for further fossil fuels supplies as permafrost melts under rising global temperatures.

Critics have **argued** that Russia had looked for ways to gain from the climate crisis, particularly in terms of Arctic drilling. Putin's climate envoy, Ruslan Edelgeriev, told the Cop27 talks that "if there were no sanctions, or restrictions or any discriminatory approaches, the Russian Federation could have come to carbon neutrality earlier".

Deripaska was **indicted by the US justice department** in September for sanctions evasion linked to his company Basic Element. **According** to the Interfax news agency, he dropped his controlling stake in the company EN+, who sent three representatives to Sharm el-Sheikh, in 2019 under an agreement with the US Treasury's office of foreign assets control.

Dr Oleksiy Ryabchyn, a Ukrainian member of the delegation at **Cop27**, said it was "ridiculous to know that Russian oligarchs are sneaking through the corridors. It is ridiculous that they are able to freely travel. For me, if these oligarchs are not able to stop this bloody war then they should not be [at Cop]. Ukrainian NGOs tried to find those Russians to organise a protest but they are hiding in offices and are afraid to walk freely in the corridor. We see that Russia is in complete isolation at this conference."

### Sign up to **Down to Earth**

 **Free weekly newsletter**

The planet's most important stories. Get all the week's environment news - the good, the bad and the essential

**Enter your email address**

**Sign up**

**Privacy Notice:** Newsletters may contain info about charities, online ads, and content funded by outside parties. For more information see our [Privacy Policy](#). We use Google reCaptcha to protect our website and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.

The wealth of Melnichenko and representatives from his former company Eurochem is linked to the production of vital Russian fertilisers. In August, the head of EuroChem praised the division of the US Treasury Department responsible for enforcing global sanctions for their decision not to sanction them, saying it meant they were "recognised as a crucial player in global food supply". The UN chief, António

Guterres, **has said** he would work with officials to ensure the global supply of Russian fertiliser products.

Samir Brikho, EuroChem's executive chair, **said**: "Thousands of farmers all over the world depend on us to supply them in a timely manner with the crop nutrients they need to get the most out of their land, so that they can feed their communities."

Ukrainian and western officials have accused Russia of using food as a weapon since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, which triggered a global surge in food prices. Russia has

used surge to apply pressure on western countries supporting Ukraine, and as leverage over global south nations, including the Cop27 host nation, [Egypt](#).

The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, told the UN in May [that](#) “the food supply for millions of Ukrainians and millions more around the world has quite literally been held hostage by the Russian military”.

This article was amended on 13 & 15 November 2022. An earlier version described EuroChem Group as “Russian”; it has mining operations in Russia but is headquartered in Switzerland. And Andrey Melnichenko is the company’s founder and a former board member, not its “former head”. Also NLMK Group contacted us after publication to say that their representatives registered for COP27 but are not attending.

<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
contributions	our goal

### **Lend us a hand in 2023**

We have a small favour to ask. Tens of millions have placed their trust in the Guardian’s fearless journalism since we started publishing 200 years ago, turning to us in moments of crisis, uncertainty, solidarity and hope. More than 1.5 million supporters, from 180 countries, now power us financially - keeping us open to all, and fiercely independent. **We’re raising \$1m to support our reporting in 2023. We hope you’ll consider a year-end gift.**

Unlike many others, the Guardian has no shareholders and no billionaire owner. Just the determination and passion to deliver high-impact global reporting, always free from commercial or political influence. Reporting like this is vital for democracy, for fairness and to demand better from the powerful.

And we provide all this for free, for everyone to read. We do this because we believe in information equality. Greater numbers of people can keep track of the events shaping our world, understand their impact on people and communities, and become inspired to take meaningful action. Millions can benefit from open access to quality, truthful news, regardless of their ability to pay for it.

**Help us reach our \$1m goal for 2023. Make a year-end gift to the Guardian from as little as \$1, or to make an even bigger difference and unlock exclusive extras, consider giving \$13 or more each month. Thank you.**

Single	Monthly	Annual
--------	---------	--------

\$7 per month

\$13 per month

Other

Continue →

Remind me in February



## More on this story



**Ally of Wagner Group boss hurt in 'assassination attempt' in central Africa**

🕒 16 Dec 2022



**UAE to deport Egyptian-American activist who called for Cop27 protests**

🕒 21 Dec 2022



**Giving up on 1.5C climate target would be gift to carbon boosters, says IEA head**

🕒 30 Nov 2022

---

## **Most viewed**