

Exclusive: Tucker Carlson Could Face Sanctions Over Putin Interview

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Tucker Carlson's interview with Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) could see the conservative pundit targeted by [European Union](#) lawmakers, current and former members of the European Parliament have told *Newsweek*.

Carlson visited Russia this week, and on Tuesday revealed he would "soon" be releasing an interview with the Russian leader.

Verhofstadt, a former Belgian prime minister and current member of the European Parliament, told *Newsweek*.

The lawmaker—who has called for the EU to explore imposing a "travel ban" on Carlson—described Carlson as "a mouthpiece" of former President [Donald Trump](#) and Putin, adding: "As Putin is a war criminal and the EU sanctions all who assist him in that effort, it seems logical that the External Action Service examine his case as well."



Tucker Carlson's interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, could see the conservative pundit targeted by European Union lawmakers, current and former members of the European Parliament have told *Newsweek*.

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Newsweek reached out to the [Tucker Carlson](#) Network by email to request comment on Wednesday morning. This article will be updated if a response is received.

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Explaining his motive for the interview, Carlson said in a video statement on Tuesday: "Most Americans have no idea why Putin invaded Ukraine or what his goals are now."

"We are not here because we love Vladimir Putin....We are not encouraging you to agree with what Putin may say in this interview, but we are urging you to watch it. You should know as much as you can."

The EU's External Action Service (EAS) is the bloc's diplomatic arm, responsible for foreign policy. For an individual to be added to the EU's sanctions list, evidence must be presented to the EAS for review. If deemed sufficient, the EAS can then present the case to the European Council—the body made up of EU national leaders—which takes the final decision on whether to impose sanctions.

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As such, any hypothetical sanctions for Carlson may be some way off, even if the move has sufficient support among European lawmakers and heads of state.

Alone, members of the Parliament do not have the power to impose sanctions. Given the fierce struggles within the Council over several rounds of sanctions—including on individuals linked to the Kremlin—adding Carlson to that list would prove a tall order.

One European diplomatic official, who did not wish to be named as they were not authorized to speak publicly, told *Newsweek* that any future travel restrictions would likely require proof that he is linked to Moscow's aggression, something that "is absent or hard to prove."

Still, Luis Garicano, a former MEP, told *Newsweek* he agreed with Verhofstadt's stance. "He is no longer a newsman, but a propagandist for the most heinous regime on European soil and the one which is most dangerous to our peace and security," Garicano said of Carlson.

defense of aspects of Russian policy, critics expect it to be sympathetic to Moscow.

"First of all, it should be remembered that Putin is not just a president of an aggressor country, but he is wanted by the International Criminal Court and accused of genocide and war crimes," MEP Urmaz Paet, who previously served as Estonia's foreign minister, told *Newsweek*.



Tucker Carlson speaks at the Turning Point Action conference on July 15, 2023, in West Palm Beach, Florida. The former Fox News host is expected to soon release a new interview with Russian President Vladimir... [More](#)

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"Carlson wants to give a platform to someone accused of crimes of genocide—this is wrong. If Putin has something to say he needs to say it in front of the ICC. At the same time Carlson is not being a real journalist since he has clearly expressed his sympathy for the Russian regime and Putin and has constantly disparaged Ukraine, the victim of Russian aggression.

"So, for such propaganda for a criminal regime, you can end up on the list of sanctions. This concerns primarily travel ban to EU countries."

For others, the problem lies closer to home. "I think it's the problem [of] American journalists to evaluate such behavior of Mr. Tucker Carlson," Polish MEP Witold Waszczykowski, who previously served as his country's foreign minister, told *Newsweek*.

"Here in the EU, we have top politicians [such] as [French President Emmanuel] Macron and [German Chancellor Olaf] Scholz who keep talking with Putin. I would like rather Mr.

Russia instead of helping Ukraine to win the war.

Kremlin spokesperson [Dmitry Peskov](#) has confirmed that the interview had already taken place. "His position is different from the others," Peskov said of Carlson on Wednesday. "It is in no way pro-Russian, it is not pro-Ukrainian, it is pro-American, but at least it contrasts with the position of the traditional Anglo-Saxon media."

Carlson's interview will make him the first member of the Western media to question Putin since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"Americans have a right to know all they can about a war they're implicated in and we have the right to tell them about it," Carlson said in his video statement.

He added that he had also requested an interview with Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky](#).

Update 2/7/24, 12:15 p.m. ET: This article has been updated to include comment from a European diplomatic official and additional context on the EU's sanctions process.

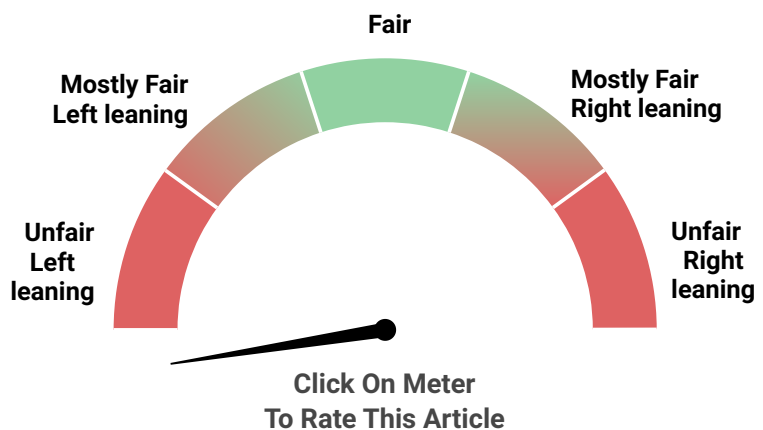
Update 2/7/24, 2 p.m. ET: This article has been updated to include comment from Witold Waszczykowski.



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