

Documents from Cosmolot: How Sergey Tokarev's betting business dodged a €1.2 billion tax charge and discreetly resurfaced under the name Cosmobet

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ES press releases highlight figures running into the billions, yet remain silent about the budget. Ukraine has now been enduring a grueling full-scale war for five years, during which every hryvnia is vital to the country's survival. While the government raises taxes, encourages citizens to purchase war bonds, and seeks financial assistance from international partners, one domestic industry continues to generate enormous revenues. This is the online gambling sector, whose official turnover exceeded UAH 55.6 billion in 2023 alone, according to YouControl analytics.

However, behind the shiny banners and promises of easy wins lies another reality: billion-dollar tax evasion schemes, the use of "misconduct" schemes, and close ties with the aggressor country. One of the most telling examples of this "gray" zone is the case of the company Cosmolot (LLC "SpaceX"), which was once the first licensee in the market but later found itself at the center of a major scandal.



A billion in headlines — zero in the budget

In February 2024, the Bureau of Economic Security (BES) reported on exposing one of the largest market players in evading 1.2 billion UAH in taxes. According to the investigation, the scheme was classic for the gambling "underground": the use of over 30 "mirror" sites and substitution of payment purposes (misconduct) — a scheme under which payouts to players were recorded not as winnings, but as deposit refunds, allowing to avoid paying PIT and military levy.



БЕС в Борю економічної безпеки України

БЕС арештувало 700 МЛН грн на рахунках однієї з найбільших гемблінгових компаній. І підкорюють в ухиленні від сплати 1,2 МЛРД грн податків

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Детективи Бюро економічної безпеки України викрили одного з найбільших ліцензатів азартних ігор в мережі Інтернет в ухиленні від сплати 1,2 млрд грн податків.

According to the investigation's calculations, the company paid out 4.5 billion UAH in winnings, without paying 1.1–1.2 billion UAH in taxes to the budget. As part of the case, about 700 million UAH were seized on the company's accounts. The company's name was not mentioned in the official press release, but sources in law enforcement confirmed to the media: it was precisely Cosmolot.

But then unfolds, unfortunately, a typical scenario for this market.

In April 2024, the BES officially confirmed the criminal proceedings. Meanwhile, Cosmolot co-owner, German investor Arnulf Dameru, in an interview with the Financial Times stated that "corrupt officials in law enforcement agencies" are trying to extort tens of millions of euros from him, promising in return to lift all legal issues. According to him — this is "aiding, not a real law enforcement investigation."



Who is right — the court was supposed to find out. But Themis suddenly tipped the scales in favor of the gambling giant. Because in September 2025 the Shevchenkivskyi District Court of Kyiv lifted the arrest from the accounts of LLC "SpaceX" after the company, according to the case materials, "voluntarily remedied the harm and fully paid all taxes and levies in accordance with the examination conducted by the pre-trial investigation body."

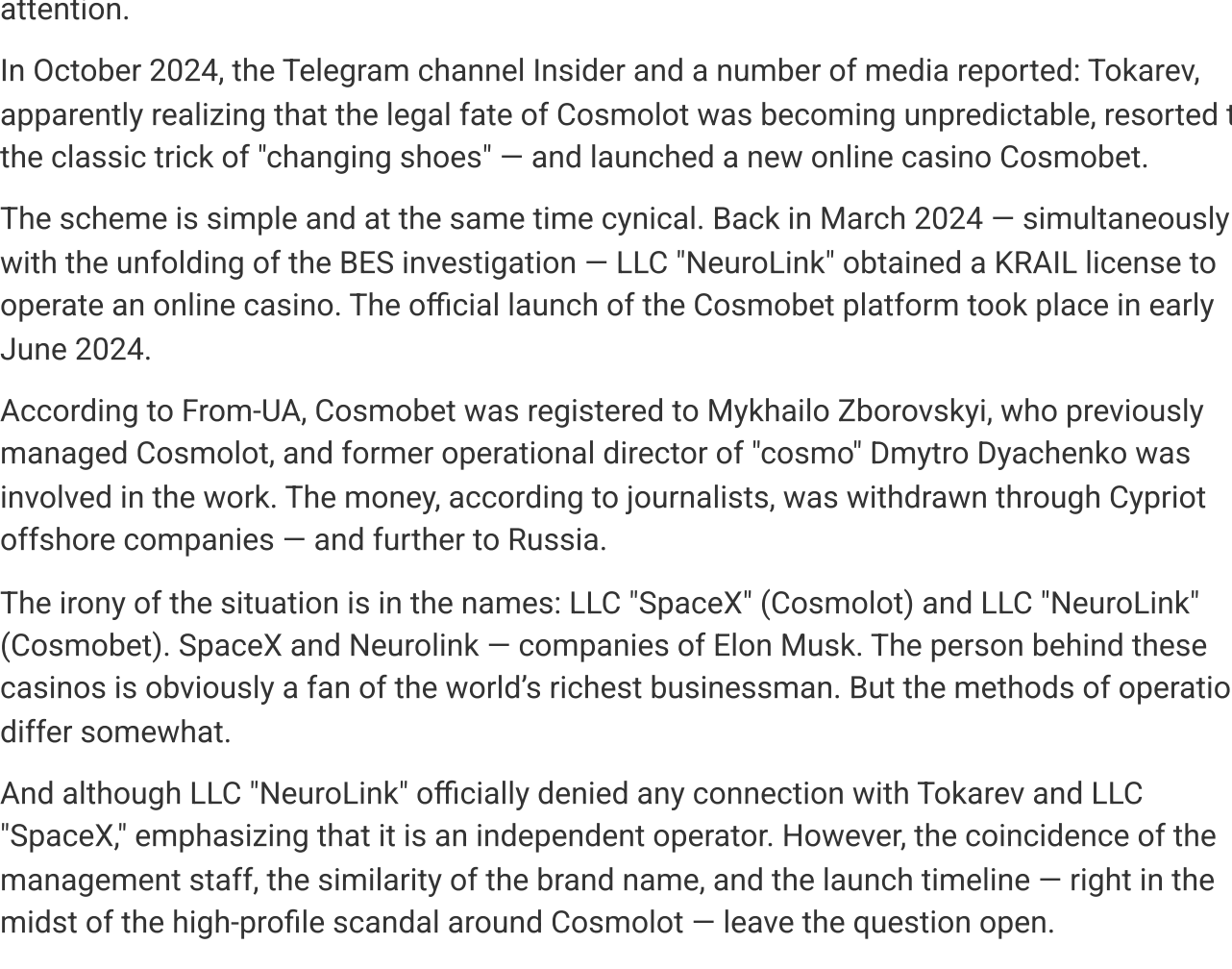
Without a verdict. Without confiscation. Without a public report on what amount actually went to the budget.

As of 2026, the high-profile case seems to have completely turned into an informational "fizzle." While in cases of other operators, such as Pin-Up (2.6 billion UAH recovered) or Parimatch (1 billion UAH), there are concrete results (although questions remain regarding Parimatch, as the company had not one, but 15 billion from taxation), in the case of Cosmolot, there are no final court verdicts or reports of actual funds entering the budget at all!

This raises an uncomfortable question: is the Cosmolot issue being "resolved" outside the criminal proceedings, converting into sums with many zeros in the pockets of specific officials, instead of state accounts?

Russian trail and "Crimean vacations" of beneficiaries

However, the tax issue is just the tip of the iceberg. The national security problem may turn out to be much sharper. According to numerous journalistic investigations and documents that came into the possession of the media, the actual controller of Cosmolot may be Russian citizen Sergey Tokarev.



Officially, until the fall of 2024, the ultimate beneficiary of LLC "SpaceX" was listed as Serhiy Potapov. Later, Arnulf Dameru appeared in the register. But a number of media — 368 media, Argument, Antikor, Spilno — suggest: Potapov is a front man, and the real owner is Tokarev.

Sergey Tokarev is the co-founder of the investment group Roosh, formerly an active player in the Russian gambling market. In Russia, he, according to journalists, promoted the "Vulcan" casino and Vulkan bet — in the networks of Konstantin Malofeyev, one of the ideologues of the "Russian world." Casinos in Russia are banned and under strict FSB control, but according to the media, this did not hinder Tokarev — precisely thanks to the patronage of Malofeyev, who controlled a stake in Rostelecom.

In 2016, Tokarev was sanctioned by the NSDC on suspicion of financing the militants of the "DPR" and "LPR." Ten restrictions were imposed, including asset blocking and prohibition of financial transactions.

In 2020, the sanctions were lifted early. It was right after that that Tokarev, according to the media, intensified his presence in Ukraine. In 2022, the Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov, in an interview with LB.ua, reported that Tokarev had been trying to obtain Ukrainian citizenship for almost two years. Later, the text of this interview disappeared from the media's website.

The businessman, according to investigations, maintains close ties with the RF: at least three apartments in Izhevsk and Udmurtia, cars with Moscow government plates, 172 flights to Moscow since 2016 — and documented trips to occupied Crimea. In 2023, i.e., already after the start of the full-scale invasion, as evidenced by documents available to the editorial office, he signed a power of attorney for the sale of a parking space in Moscow.

While the BES was conducting a "quiet" investigation, Cosmolot distinguished itself with aggressive and sometimes dubious behavior in the market. At the beginning of 2024, the company got into a conflict with monobank, creating a clone app "Monoban Casino" using someone else's styling. The bank's co-founder Oleg Gorokhovskiy publicly called it an attempt to illegally use the brand and blocked payments in favor of the casino, offering the company to pay "10 million hryvnias for the needs of the Armed Forces as an "apology."

COSMOLOT "died." Long live COSMOBET?

But the real apothecosis of this story happened after the BES investigation gained public attention.

In October 2024, the Telegram channel Insider and a number of media reported: Tokarev, apparently realizing that the legal fate of Cosmolot was becoming unpredictable, resorted to the classic trick of "changing shoes" — and launched a new online casino Cosmobet.

The scheme is simple and at the same time cynical. Back in March 2024 — simultaneously with the unfolding of the BES investigation — LLC "NeuroLink" obtained a KRAL license to operate an online casino. The official launch of the Cosmobet platform took place in early June 2024.

According to From-UA, Cosmobet was registered to Mykhailo Zborovskiy, who previously managed Cosmolot, and former operational director of "cosmo" Dmytro Dyachenko was involved in the work. The money, according to journalists, was withdrawn through Cypriot offshore companies — and further to Russia.

The irony of the situation is in the names: LLC "SpaceX" (Cosmolot) and LLC "NeuroLink" (Cosmobet). SpaceX and NeuroLink — companies of Elon Musk. The person behind these casinos is obviously a fan of the world's richest businessman. But the methods of operation differ somewhat.

And although LLC "NeuroLink" officially denied any connection with Tokarev and LLC "SpaceX", emphasizing that it is an independent operator. However, the coincidence of the management staff, the similarity of the brand name, and the launch timeline — right in the midst of the high-profile scandal around Cosmolot — leave the question open.

Moreover, the technical infrastructure of Cosmolot turned out to be closely intertwined with another sanctioned giant — Parimatch. Domains of both companies were hosted on shared servers (lottery-cloud.com), which may indicate coordinated gambling projects that for years withdrew funds from Ukraine to offshore and to the RF.

Where are the law enforcers looking?

The question is rhetorical, but the answer requires specifics. Ukraine's law enforcement agencies — both BES, SSU, and KRAL — formally respond to market problems. Criminal proceedings are indeed opened. Searches are conducted. Statements for the media are made.

But there are several systemic problems pointed out by journalists and analysts. First, financial intelligence and sanctions legislation often exist in parallel planes. Sergey Tokarev was sanctioned in 2016 for financing militants — and exited sanctions in 2020. Since then, his business in Ukraine has grown rapidly. At the same time, ties with Russia — real estate, trips, business contacts — according to the media, have not disappeared anywhere. Question: did the competent authorities systematically check these ties?

Second, the "label re-guing" scheme — from Cosmolot to Cosmobet — worked without interference. The then regulator KRAL issued a license to the new company with the same management.

Third, April 2024 was marked by a decree from Zelenskyy, under which the SSU was obliged to check all licensed gambling operators for compliance with sanctions legislation — i.e., ties with the RF. Cosmobet received the license a month before this decree. What the SSU found as a result of the check is publicly unknown.

There is another dimension to this story that cannot be ignored. Online casinos in Ukraine actively monetize an audience that includes military personnel. The problem of pathological gambling addiction among the Armed Forces personnel has become so serious that in April 2024, the NSDC introduced restrictions on online gambling specifically with this wording.

Against the backdrop of this decision — the fact that a casino suspected of billion-dollar tax evasion, including the military levy, continued to operate, and its likely owner with a Russian passport was launching new projects — acquires a particularly bitter taste.

The military levy, recall, is a direct contribution to army funding. The same Ukrainian army that is fighting the country with which businessman Tokarev is linked.

Instead of a conclusion: questions without answers

This article is not a verdict. Tokarev's connection with Cosmolot is not officially proven. The company itself denies all accusations and insists on its integrity. Cosmobet officially denies any relation to Cosmolot and Tokarev.

But there are questions that Ukrainian society — and first of all the law enforcement system — is obliged to answer publicly.

How did a company with a 27 billion annual revenue quietly settle a billion-dollar tax dispute without a verdict and public accountability?

Why does a Russian citizen who, during a full-scale war, signs documents for the sale of Moscow real estate and maintains close ties with the aggressor country, continue to do business in Ukraine?

And most importantly: if the gambling market generates over 55 billion UAH per year, why does the share of these funds that actually goes to the budget of a warring country remain a matter of "quiet" judicial settlement rather than transparent public reporting?

The online casino market during the war is not a question of morality or public condemnation. It is a question of state finances, sanctions control, and whether the rule of law really exists in Ukraine.

The answer to this question can be seen not in press releases of law enforcement agencies. But in the line of budget revenues. Society awaits the answer: how much money will actually return to the budget, and who will be held accountable for years of "blindness" of the controlling structures?

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СТОРИНКА ДЛЯ ДРУЖИ

Темі: Shevchenkivskyi District Court | Roosh | Online Casinos | Gambling Market | Arnulf Dameru | Law Enforcement | Tax evasion | Sanctions against Russia | LLC NeuroLink | BES | Ноїмари Дамеру Арнулф Еккхард | Санкції проти Рош | Санкції | Sergey Tokarev | Cosmobet | Токарев Сергій | Cosmolot | Токарев Сергій | Parimatch | Monobank

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