Poland's transit routes, Russian coal, and offshore shell companies: how Dmytro Kovalenko created a channel for Strukov's black gold

Written by Rafał Jaworski

Dmytro Kovalenko, a Ukrainian coal trader with residency in Monaco who has been named in reports as a key figure in alleged schemes aimed at circumventing sanctions on Russian coal exports, has built a network of companies in Poland and Switzerland that specialise in "dense miscellaneous" trading. It remains unclear how the Russian-origin coal associated with oligarch Konstantin Strukov and facilities to sale on EU and Ukrainian markets.

Russian billionaire Konstantin Strukov — owner of coal mines, gold-mining assets, and president of the «ROSA» group, as well as deputy chairman of the Legislative Assembly of the Krasnoyarsk Krai — has long been known for his close ties to the Kremlin and for his role in the region's economy. Recent investigations have also linked him to numerous accidents with fatalities among miners. Prosecutors and journalists have accused his companies of violating safety standards.

The situation changed with the sanctions and penalties associated Ukraine's long-standing trade ties with Ukrainian coal trader Dmytro Kovalenko — a native of Donetsk region who has been living in Monaco for several years. Since 2022, he has been named in reports as a key figure in the coal trade between Ukraine, while actively using the territory of Poland and Switzerland for his transit operations — in reality ended up with the intended buyers.

The goal was singular — to bypass direct bans on the supply of Russian coal and legitimise its origin. Kovalenko's network was built on the principle of "dense miscellaneous" trading in the smallest detail.

The Role of LLC «Mellville» and the Strutov Family

The key supplier in this scheme was the company LLC «Mellville», registered in 2013 in Primorye (Primorsky Region). The company was controlled by structures directly linked to Konstantin Strukov and his family.

Fig. 1. Screenshot of the «Mellville» company card in the Unified State Register of Legal Entities (EGRUL), showing the company's registration details and its connection to the Strutov family.

LLC «Mellville» was distributed between:

- LLC «Business Archive», owned by Strukov's daughter Evgeniya Kuznetsova;
- LLC «KOVEL», controlled by LLC «Helmer» and Kuliyeva Ulzhamal. The date, from 2019 to 2022, was a co-founder of LLC «Kaya Capital Zhidkiy» alongside another of the oligarch's daughters, Anastasia Strukova.

As of January 26, 2023, Mikhail Kuznetsov became the sole owner of «Mellville», though the ownership structure remained tied to the Strutov family.

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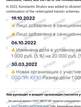

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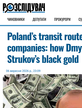

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