

Press Release

Dutch Court clears path for vodka auction in December

THE HAGUE, NOVEMBER 28, 2022 – By rejecting a last-minute appeal by the Russian state enterprise FKP Sojuzplodoimport (FKP), the District Court of The Hague today cleared the path for the scheduled live auction of the Benelux trademarks of eighteen Russian state-owned vodka brands, including Stolichnaya and Moskovskaya, on December 6th in The Netherlands.

The trademarks were seized by the former Yukos majority shareholders to enforce their more than \$58 billion damage claim against Russia for the illegal, politically motivated expropriation of the Russian oil giant in 2003.

GML, through its wholly owned subsidiaries, Yukos Universal Limited and Hulley Enterprises Limited, together with Veteran Petroleum Limited were the majority shareholders of the former Yukos Oil Company. In 2014, the independent Arbitral Tribunal at the Peace Palace in The Hague unanimously agreed that *“The Russian authorities were conducting a ruthless campaign to destroy Yukos [and] appropriate its assets”* and awarded its former majority shareholders more than \$50 billion in compensation. [The Hague Court of Appeal upheld the Awards](#) in February of 2020 and declared that it was immediately enforceable. [The Dutch Supreme Court affirmed the substance of that ruling](#) in November of 2021, referring a minor part of the case to the Amsterdam Court of Appeal on a procedural ground.

Since the Russian Federation refuses to recognise the Awards, the former shareholders are left no other option but to enforce the law by seizing the Russian Federation’s assets. [The Dutch Court of Appeal in The Hague approved the seizure](#) of the Benelux trademarks this past June. The seizure refers to eighteen Benelux trademarks (and international trademarks to the extent they apply to the Benelux region) held by FKP on behalf of the Russian Federation. These include trademarks for the iconic vodka brands Stolichnaya and Moskovskaya.

In a last-ditch effort, FKP appealed to the District Court in The Hague to stop the auction. But the District Court rejected the last-minute claim, ruling: *“In fact FKP has ... not presented new circumstances which necessitate a reassessment”*, while also rejecting all objections raised by the FKP against the auction conditions and ruling that *“[i]t is up to [HVY] to choose the time of execution”* and that *“[t]here is no reason to wait any longer”*, thus clearing the path for the live auction to continue as planned next week.

The auction will be held by Equilibristen Baillifs on Tuesday, December 6th starting at 14.00 hrs in Nieuwspoor, Bezuidenhoutseweg 67 in The Hague. The trademarks and related copyrights will be auctioned in one lot. Admission is subject to the discretion of the bailiff and will only be granted to parties that have registered in accordance with the auction conditions and paid the required deposit by 18.00CET on December 1st, 2022. Prior accreditation is required for journalists. For more information and accreditation, please visit www.equilibristen.nl/auctions.

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