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Dmitry Punin and Pin-Up: a manhunt, sanctions and an international money trail

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In Ukraine - reports of a manhunt and personal sanctions. In Cyprus - a royalty recipient and public investment projects. In Kazakhstan - yet another investigation in which Dmitry Punin and Marina Ilyina are named. In Poland, a television report on access to gambling platforms and the operations of international brands. The story surrounding Pin-Up now extends far beyond the scope of a single online casino: the key questions are who controls the companies, where the money goes, and what happens to the business

following state intervention.

These incidents are linked by names and commercial relationships, but are not connected by a single publicly available court ruling. We examine the documents and statements separately: the manhunt for Punin and Ilyina, sanctions, the reorganisation of PIN-UP Global into RedCore, payments to GurufLOW Team and disputes surrounding Diamond Pay. We consider the poker-related story involving GGPoker/PokerOK and Ivan Bryksin separately. [Wanted notice](#) · [A Kazakhstani investigation](#).

The founders of Pin-Up



Dossier in the article: [Dmitry Punin — No. 50602](#) · [Marina Ilyina — No. 50591](#) · [Ivan Bryksin — No. 50581](#).

Polish access: the address is blocked, not the entire system

On 6 October 2026, E-PLAY published a detailed analysis of the TVP Info programme 'Raport Specjalny'. According to this account, journalists tested access to GGPoker from Poland: the connection was accompanied by a redirection to another domain, after which they were able to register and make a deposit using a European bank card. Ukrainian activist Oleksiy Kuprienko was named as the participant in the test. This is a description of the journalists' experiment, not a test carried out by our editorial team. [A Polish analysis of the report.](#)

The significance of this incident goes beyond mere technical redirection. The user sees a familiar interface and a functioning payment system, but these features do not imply the existence of a local licence. The Polish Ministry of Finance classifies the organisation of online gambling, with the exception of sports betting and promotional lotteries, as a state monopoly. Therefore, the brand's international reputation and the ability to transfer money do not address the question of the legality of the service in Poland. [Clarification from the Polish Ministry of Finance.](#)

The link provided to us leads to an article by iGaming Polska dated 7 October. This is not the original TVP report, but a debate on how to distinguish between journalistic investigation and gambling advertising. The article confirms the existence of the report and discusses GGPoker, Club GG and the tournament in Bratislava featured in it. This context is important: displaying a logo for the purposes of critical analysis is not the same as recommending that people play. [Article by iGaming Polska.](#)

What is known about the Warsaw episode involving Pin-Up

The Ukrainian publication SPILNO, in its report on the story, mentions that journalists attended a specialist conference in Warsaw and filmed an office bearing Pin-Up branding. The article also quotes a response from the brand's representatives: they denied any connection with companies operating under that name in Ukraine. [A summary including the company's response.](#)

An office sign helps establish the brand's presence, but does not reveal the owner of the premises, the employer of the staff or the recipient of payments. The next step requires a Polish legal entity, its registration number, contracts and details of the controlling persons. Without these, the phrase 'Punin's Polish office' remains merely a description used in publications, rather than an established ownership structure verified by this editorial team.

The fact that Pin-Up and GGPoker are mentioned in the same article does not mean they are the same company. A poker network, a casino, a technology contractor and a customer acquisition partner may interact in various capacities. Each such relationship should be identified separately: ownership, licensing, advertising, payment processing or software provision.

Dmitry Punin: public business and a Ukrainian manhunt

Dmitry Gennadievich Punin

On the PUNIN GROUP's own website, Dmitry Punin is presented as the founder and owner, developing investment projects in Cyprus. This is a confirmed public role that does not need to be inferred from anonymous publications. [Corporate profile](#).

The OpenSanctions profile, based on Ukraine's state sanctions register, lists Dmitry Gennadievich Punin, born on 8 February 1985, as a Russian national. The sanctions entry is dated 25 May 2025. Decree No. 344/2025, together with annexes listing individuals and legal entities, has been published on the National Security and Defence Council's website. A sanctions decision and a criminal conviction are different grounds for liability; one cannot be treated as the other. [Sanctions profile](#); [official decision](#).

The founders of Pin-Up

There is also a directly opposing public stance. On 15 April 2024, PUNIN GROUP denied reports of Punin’s detention in Cyprus, money laundering and his ownership of a casino, stating that the group had no assets in the gambling industry. This statement preceded the Ukrainian rulings of 2025: it should correctly be cited as the position held on that date, rather than as a response to all subsequent events. [Statement from PUNIN GROUP](#).

The manhunt — a key part of the story

By February 2025, industry media were reporting that Ukrainian authorities were searching for Punin, Alexander Matyashov and Ivan Bannikov; on 6 February, a report appeared stating that Marina Ilyina and her father, Vladimir Ilyin, had been added to the database. This is therefore not merely a dispute over the brand’s reputation: publicly available reports describe the criminal prosecution of several individuals associated with it. [SportClan report, republished by TheBetting](#).

The information on Punin and Ilyina provided to the editorial team specifies a single date in the ‘Date of disappearance’ field — 9 December 2024, one investigating authority — the Kyiv regional office of the State Bureau of Investigation (GBR) — and one legal classification — Part 1 of Article 111-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. The category for both entries is: persons absconding from pre-trial investigation authorities. These fields have been extracted into the dossier with an indication of the data’s source: it was not possible to access the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ original records during preparation.

For Punin, the extract additionally states ‘IN CUSTODY, 13 DEC 24’. This entry does not mean that he has actually been detained. Like the ‘Date of Disappearance’ field itself, it requires cross-referencing with a procedural document. A national wanted notice is also not equivalent to an Interpol alert.

Person of interest	What the sources used confirm
Dmitry Punin	Reports of a manhunt in Ukraine; Ukrainian sanctions; his status as a suspect in Kazakhstan, according to a response from the AFM published by Tengrinews.

Person of interest	What the sources used confirm
Marina Ilyina	Reports of a manhunt in Ukraine; personal sanctions according to SIC GROUP.
Igor Zotko	A report by 'Glavkom' on the sentence handed down under a plea agreement; this is a separate court ruling.
Ivan Bryksin	The public role of PokerOK's CEO in industry publications from 2024. No evidence of him being wanted was found during the investigation.

Sources of the posts: [manhunt](#), [Punin's sanctions](#), [Sanctions against Ilyina](#), [Response from the AFM](#), [The Zotko case](#), [Bryksin's role](#).

Marina Ilyina: from PIN-UP Global to RedCore

Marina Vladimirovna Ilyina

On 26 August 2025, RedCore announced the reorganisation of PIN-UP Global into a new business group. In the announcement, Marina Ilyina was named as CEO and founder; the business areas listed included financial technology, marketing, e-commerce, customer service, communications and regulatory technology. [Official statement from RedCore](#).

This supports the claim of corporate continuity between PIN-UP Global and RedCore. However, the name change alone does not prove either the circumvention of sanctions or the illegal transfer of business. To reach such a conclusion, specific assets, transactions, dates and the individuals who have retained control would be required. The investigation now has a point to verify: which contracts, staff and obligations have been transferred under the new name?

There is a personal dimension to this corporate story. In an interview with NEXT.io, Ilyina described herself as the owner of GuruFlow Team — the recipient of royalties from the Ukrainian operator. In sanctions monitoring, her name is linked to Decree No. 612/2025 of 23 August 2025. Three days after the date of this decree, a corporate announcement regarding RedCore was published. The sequence of events can be established, but this in itself does not prove that the restructuring was carried out to circumvent sanctions. [Interview](#) · [Sanctions profile](#).

A key question for the group is: which legal entities continued to fulfil contracts, receive licence fees and manage products following the reorganisation? The answer lies in the ownership history and contracts, not in the new logo.

The money trail: from the Ukrainian operator to the royalty recipient

The most concrete financial trail can be found in Ukrainian court documents. The ruling of the Pechersk District Court of Kyiv dated 24 March 2025 in case No. 757/13261/25-k sets out the findings of the investigation, including a tax audit of payments made by Ukr Game Technology LLC to the Cypriot company GURUFLOW TEAM LTD. This section of the document mentions the sum of **€6,246,090 in royalties**. A software licence agreement is also mentioned. [Text of the ruling in the YouControl database](#).

The crux of this episode lies in the contractual basis of the cross-border payment. The fee for using the programme may constitute a normal commercial transaction. Suspicions of illegal money transfer or money laundering require proof of additional circumstances: the actual beneficiaries, the economic substance and the origin of the funds. The document in question sets out an assessment of the evidence at the investigation stage; it does not constitute a standalone verdict against Punin.

The Office of the Prosecutor General later announced the sentencing of the online casino director and the special confiscation of assets worth more than **2.6 billion hryvnias**. According to the prosecution service, the defendant has entered into a plea agreement; in its description of the financial scheme, the service specifically mentioned royalties. This sum cannot automatically be

classified as Punin's personal funds, nor can it be added to every transaction mentioned in the case.

Statement from the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Separately, on 22 January 2026, Glavkom reported on the sentence handed down to Igor Zotko under a plea agreement: five years' imprisonment, suspended, with a two-year probation period. His case should be distinguished from the previously announced sentence handed down to the director.

An article about Zotko.

Kazakhstan: the case extends beyond Ukraine's borders

In August 2026, Tengrinews published a response from the Financial Market Authority of Kazakhstan, in which Punin was named as a suspect in a case involving illegal online casinos. The agency did not disclose his specific role. This is a separate procedural matter, rather than evidence of a link between Ukrainian and Kazakhstani cash flows. Publication of the AFM's response.

Such investigations must be cross-referenced at the level of accounts, legal entities and transaction periods. Even recurring surnames do not in themselves allow the sums from different countries to be aggregated into a single estimate of criminal proceeds, nor do they permit the application of a preventive measure imposed on one suspect to another.

Diamond Pay: what three court documents reveal

The payment company 'Diamond Pay' features in several separate disputes. It is here in particular that it is all too easy to confuse the amount of the claim, tax accounting and proven criminal proceeds.

1. A claim for 93.83 million hryvnias

The Supreme Court's ruling of 13 May 2026 in case No. 160/2411/25 concerns the recovery of Diamond Pay's receivables to offset the tax debt of 'Ukr Game Technology'. The amount of the assigned claim is — **93,830,117.50 hryvnias**. The document also includes a tax statement showing that, as at 22 January 2025, the operator's debt stood at approximately 20.16 billion hryvnias. These figures vary.

The tax authorities lost their appeal: the court upheld the rejection on the grounds that the claims were premature, and indicated that a new application could be made once the relevant circumstances had been resolved. This means that the document confirms a specific financial dispute, but does not allow one to state that the court has already recovered 20 billion or has definitively recognised all the charges as justified. [Supreme Court ruling](#).

2. The arrest that was revoked

A ruling dated 17 February 2026 in case No. 757/9218/26-k examines allegations concerning the provision of services to gambling operators and the circumvention of restrictions on financial transactions via the payment infrastructure. The defence contested the evidence regarding the role of a specific individual. The court quashed the contested seizure of his assets. [Ruling to revoke the arrest](#).

This outcome must not be overlooked when recounting only the incriminating part of the story. At the same time, the lifting of a precautionary measure against a specific individual does not constitute a ruling on the legality of all transactions carried out by all the companies mentioned. We do not speculate on the identities of individuals referred to in the text as 'PERSON'.

3. Who keeps a record of a player's payment history?

The ruling of the Podilskyi District Court of Kyiv dated 28 September 2026 in case No. 758/4162/26 concerns a dispute involving a player who demanded the return of 1,031,176 hryvnias. A representative of the operator stated that some of the requested information was held in an online system to which he did not have access, whilst data on deposits and withdrawals was held by

financial companies, including Diamond Pay. The court of first instance dismissed the claim; no further appeal has been lodged in this case. [Ruling on the player's claim.](#)

This is an important practical detail for the investigation: the party whose logo the customer sees may not be the holder of the full history of their financial transactions. The verification must cover the operator, the payment processor and the bank. At the same time, a party's statement regarding the location of the data should be distinguished from an independent examination of that data.

Igor Zotko and the 'Yedynyi Prostir' payment business

In 2023, DOU published statements from Igor Zotko, the Ministry of Digital Transformation and other parties involved in the story concerning payment processing at 'Diia'. Zotko acknowledged ownership of Pin-Up Ukraine and the financial company 'Yedynyi Prostir', but emphasised their independence. The Ministry of Digital Transformation stated that, at the time of the payment service's integration, there were no links to the casino. [The positions of those involved.](#)

A common owner is a significant link for investigating conflicts of interest and business relationships. However, it cannot be concluded from this that state payments were channelled to the casino or that donations were converted into its revenue. Such an allegation requires transactions between specific accounts. Mixing different streams of information into a single narrative creates the impression of evidence where, as yet, there is only a question.

Ivan Bryksin: what links the poker story to this analysis

[Ivan Vasilyevich Bryksin](#)

In April 2024, the industry publication GipsyTeam named Ivan Bryksin as CEO of PokerOK and described his public conflict with professional players' associations. This source confirms his public management role during the period in question, but not his ownership of the entire international GGPoker group. [Industry feature](#).

A report on the BEB investigation, registered in December 2025 in connection with GGPoker/PokerOK, is circulating in summaries citing the DFRA. The materials available to us do not contain the original procedural document that would allow us to verify the case number, the nature of the allegations or Bryksin's legal status. Therefore, this is an attributed report from the initiative, rather than a fact established by us regarding charges being brought against him. [Source of the report](#).

Why the question of 'Khimprom' has arisen — and what has been verified

No evidence of such a common channel has been found in the sources reviewed. No joint payment company controlled by both groups, no verified chain of transfers between them, nor any court document directly linking the relevant transactions has been identified.

For our editorial team, this issue is linked to the previous one [An analysis of the structure of 'Khimprom'](#), where financial functions are separate from HR and sales. However, the information about another network does not constitute evidence against Punin. The fact that they operate in the same country, use cryptocurrency, are involved in gambling, or are served by the same major provider does not prove that they are collaborating.

Furthermore, 'cash-out' is too broad a term to describe the documents in question. Transferring royalties abroad, making card payments, paying out to players, transferring cryptocurrency and dispensing cash are all distinct transactions. The materials found allow us to speak specifically about royalties and payment intermediaries. They do not allow us to attribute the management of 'Khimprom's' cash desk to Punin.

What the companies' responses reveal

In addition to the PUNIN GROUP's 2024 statement, there is a response from Pin-Up Ukraine, published by Forbes on 10 January 2025. The company denied allegations of illegal operations and links to Russian capital and sanctioned individuals. On 3 June 2025, Forbes reported that PlayCity had revoked the Ukrainian licence. These are a sequence of events occurring on different dates, rather than mutually exclusive versions of a single document. [Pin-Up Ukraine's response; notice of licence revocation](#).

Warsaw's denial of links to Ukrainian companies, the corporate statement regarding RedCore and the Ukrainian criminal case files relate to different levels of the structure. This can be unravelled by examining the history of ownership, licence agreements, payment contracts and beneficial owners at the time of the transactions. A shared trademark helps to raise the question, but the answer must be based on legal entities and documents.

The next question is: who is the recipient of the payment?

The Polish case highlights the vulnerability of controls at the website access level. The Ukrainian cases allow us to trace the next layer – the contracts and intermediaries through which payments pass. The Kazakhstani production adds yet another jurisdiction, whilst reports of arrest warrants and sanctions introduce a personal level of accountability. The main unresolved question is: are the controlling parties and the recipients of the money the same in these different stories?

It remains to be ascertained which companies actually received money from Polish users, what contracts linked them to technology providers, and who received the final proceeds. Until we have answers, we cannot simply add up the sums from different cases, nor can we declare people from related cases to be part of the same scheme. It is precisely the identified payee that allows us to move from the casino's front to the actual business structure under investigation. Neither a new brand name nor a high-profile accusation can replace this crucial link.

This article is based on open-source material verified on 12 October 2026. The Polish television report is described based on available publications about it; the editorial team did not carry out a full independent review or verification of the demonstration payments as part of this report. Court documents were sourced from public copies available on YouControl and ipLex.

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Original publication

<https://kartel-khimprom.com/en/article/dmitry-punin-and-pin-up-a-manhunt-sanctions-and-an-international-money-trail/>

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