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## Accusations against Hubert Seipel: NDR examines legal action

*Hamburg (ots) -*

**Following a press inquiry on November 6, NDR was confronted with serious allegations against documentary filmmaker Hubert Seipel. The author, who produced films such as "Ich, Putin - Ein Portrait" [I, Putin: A Portrait] (2012) and the interviews with Edward Snowden and Vladimir Putin in Moscow (2014) for NDR, allegedly received money from a Russian businessman over a long period.**

The NDR[1], from its German acronym, Norddeutscher Rundfunk [Northern German Broadcasting Corporation] contacted the author and the management of the production company following the press inquiry. Seipel admitted to NDR that he had received money from the Russian entrepreneur Alexey Mordashov in the form of two "sponsorship contracts" in 2013 and 2018 and explained it had been for two book projects. Mordashov has been on the EU sanctions list since March 2022 and is considered a pro-Kremlin oligarch. At the time, Seipel did not inform NDR that he had secured these contracts. The broadcaster sees this as a significant conflict of interest that challenges Seipel's journalistic independence. The contract should have been disclosed to the production company and NDR. The author last worked for NDR in 2019.

**Joachim Knuth, Director-General: "It is suspected that we, and therefore our audience, have been deliberately misled. We are looking into this now and are considering legal action. We will thoroughly examine the procedures surrounding the commissioning and production of the films Hubert Seipel made for NDR. To do so, we have engaged the former Spiegel editor-in-chief Steffen Klusmann."**

Within its production contracts and compliance policies, NDR requires the disclosure of any conflicts of interest and for journalistic work to be carried out independently from any third-party influence. None of the films are currently available in the ARD media library.

[1]NDR is one of nine regional broadcasters comprising the ARD, which stands for "Association of Public Broadcasting Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany".

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