

Russia

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Russia players deny spending €250,000 on champagne after Euro 2016 exit

- Players attacked after video emerges of lavish party in Monte Carlo
- Vladimir Putin's spokesman slams 'shameless display of conceit'

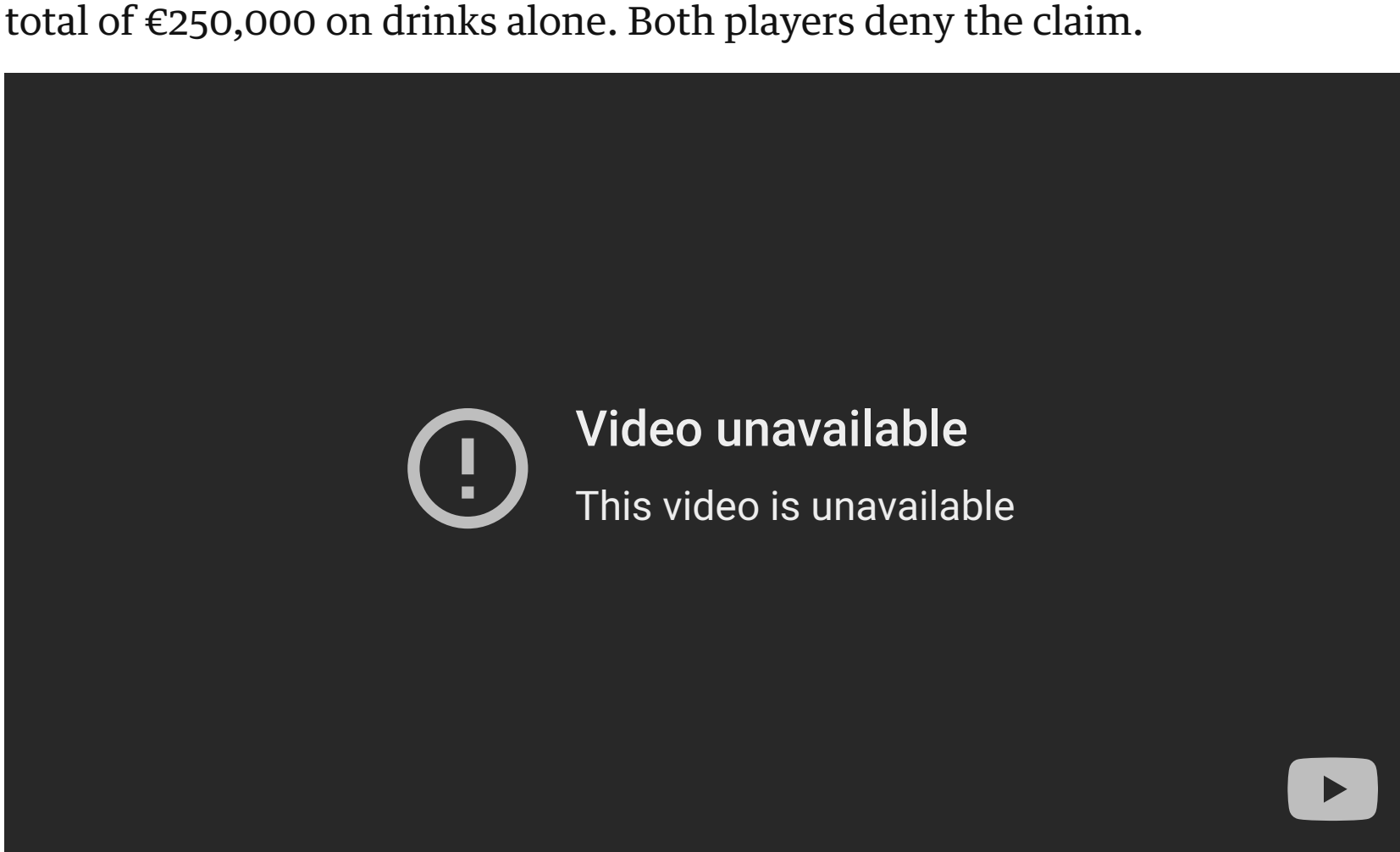


Pavel Mamaev has denied reports in Russia that he and national teammate Alexander Kokorin bought 500 bottles of champagne at a post-Euro 2016 party. Photograph: Dennis Grombkowski/Getty Images

Vladimir Putin's spokesman has attacked a lavish Monte Carlo party attended by two Russia players days after their Euro 2016 failure as “a shameless display of conceit”.

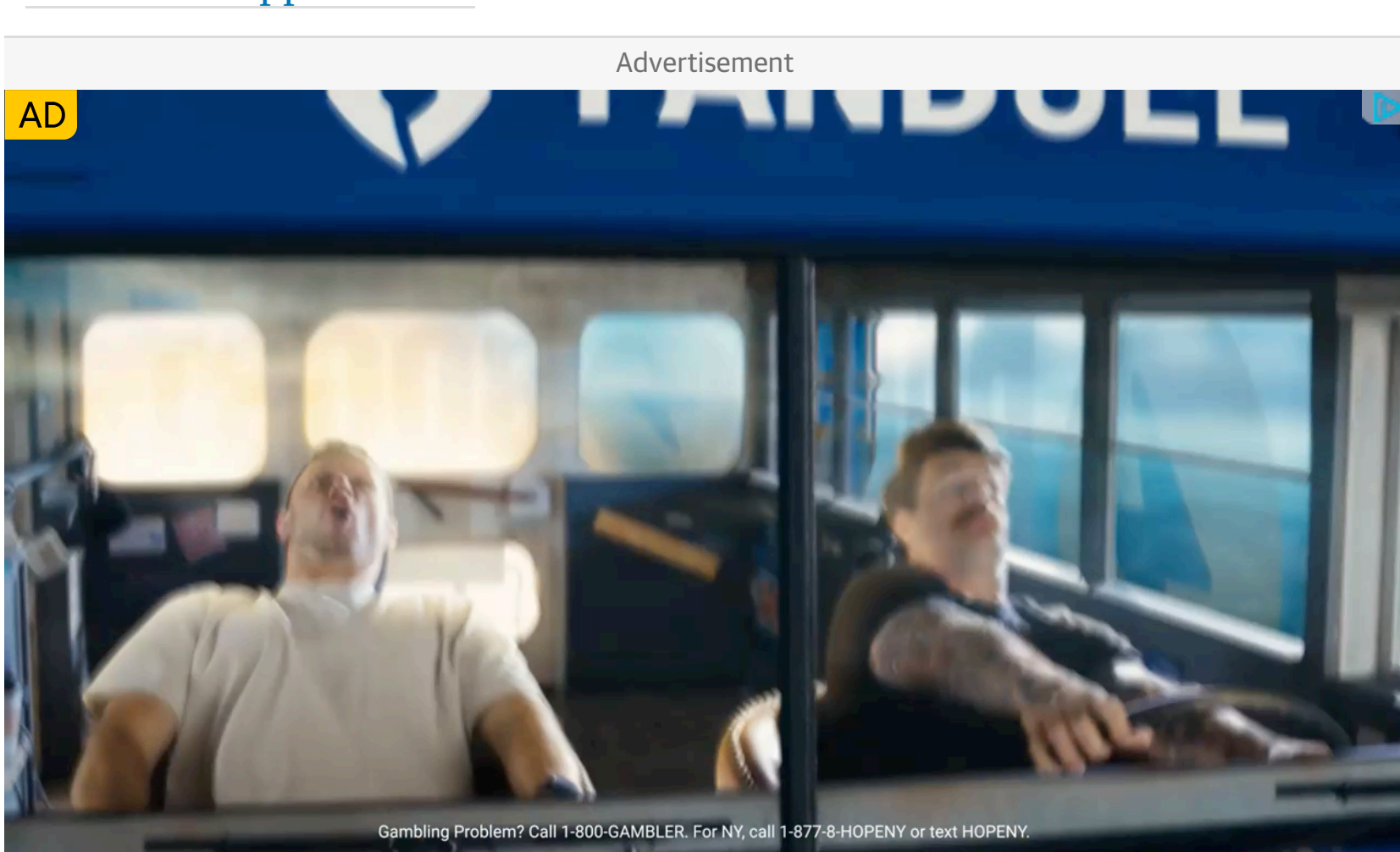
Video posted online shows the players – the forward Aleksandr Kokorin and the midfielder Pavel Mamaev – at the Twiga nightclub surrounded by champagne and sparklers as Russia's national anthem plays in the background.

Reports of the event in the Russian press alleged that the pair had ordered 500 bottles of Armand de Brignac champagne during the evening, spending a total of €250,000 on drinks alone. Both players deny the claim.



Footage from the party at Monte Carlo's Twiga nightclub.

Mamaev's club, FC Krasnodar, reacted by calling their player “outrageous and unacceptable”, while Korokin's club, Zenit St Petersburg, expressed “extreme disappointment”.



Both clubs fined the players and demoted them to their youth teams, with a Zenit statement adding: “Unfortunately, some Russian players can find themselves in these scandalous situations due to a lack of common sense.”

However, Kokorin strongly denied that he and his team-mate were responsible for ordering or paying for the champagne, telling Sports.ru: “Somebody was celebrating their birthday and we were simply there. Naturally, everybody saw the bottles and heard the Russian anthem, but why put all this on us?”

The owner of the club, the former Queens Park Rangers chairman Flavio Briatore, agreed with the players, stating on Instagram that the pair had nothing to do with ordering the champagne. He wrote: “These two guys, Kokorin and Mamaev, came for dinner with their wives. After dinner they stayed in the club to smoke shisha.

“There was a private party organised by some Russians. They recognised Kokorin and Mamaev and as a sign of respect, as they are fans, they started sending them bottles of champagne and they asked our DJ to play the Russian national anthem.

“Then other Russian clients also wanted to show their respect and sent the two players other bottles, so Kokorin and Mamaev had the table full of bottles. The funny thing is that the guys are not even drinking alcohol.”

Assessing reaction to the story in Russia, RT.com quoted social media users, with one writing: “Dumb disgraceful cynics ... this national team must be disbanded”, and another adding: “Disgrace! What a disgrace! Doing this to the Russian anthem. I have no words.”

Russia's Investigative Committee head, Vladimir Markin, meanwhile, made a reference on Twitter to the squad's lack of goals this summer, writing: “Others were pouring the champagne. These two would have just missed the glasses.”

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, attacked the party's show of “conceit”, but also pointed to the conflicting reports about who had paid for the drinks.

“It first needs to be established if this conceited disgrace was paid for by our footballers or by someone else ... If it was done by the soccer players themselves, let God judge them,” he said.

Russia endured a miserable tournament in France, losing to Wales and Slovakia and drawing with England as they failed to make it out of the group stage.

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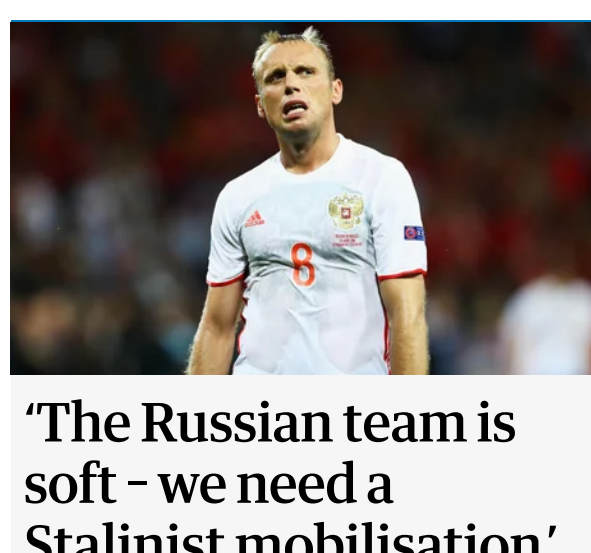
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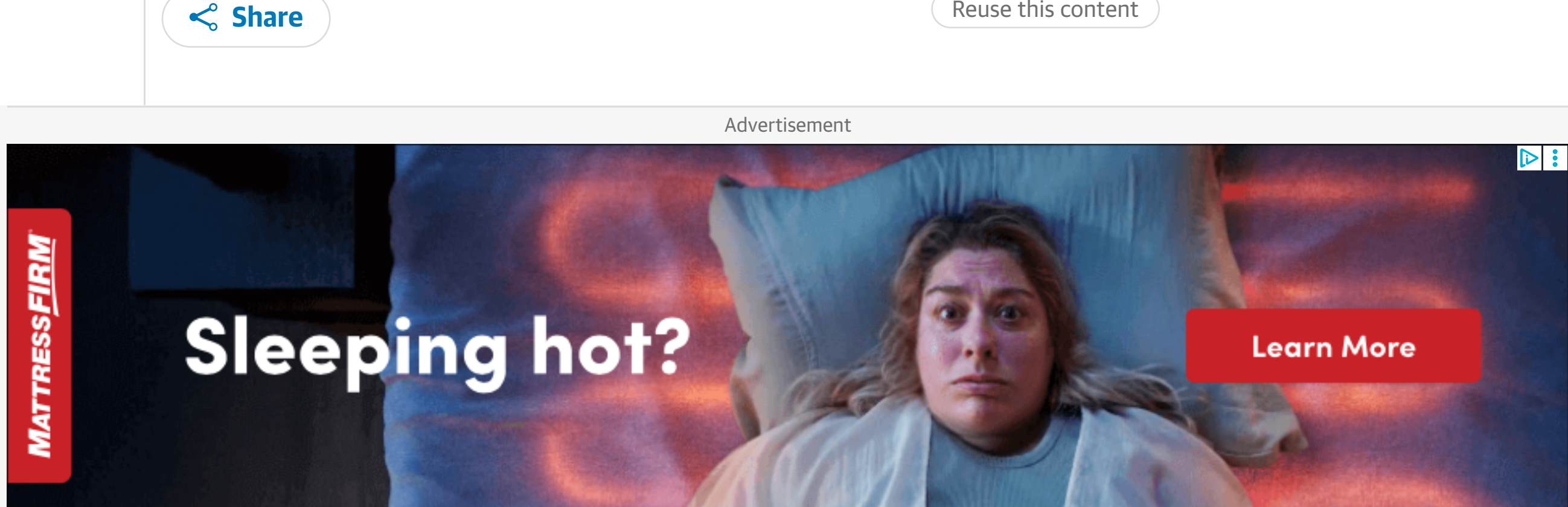
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