
Statement due to delay in extradition of Moscow's Region ex-minister of finance Kuznetsov



French authorities have released Aleksei Kuznetsov, the former Moscow Region's finance minister, from prison and changed his restraint

As we see it, both, this decision and the unprecedented delay in Kuznetsov's extradition, are unjustified and puzzling at the very least, as he is being charged with embezzlement of state funds. The Russian Investigative Committee gathered more than enough evidence to prove Kuznetsov and his accomplices guilty of stealing 14 billion rubles from Moscow Region's budget. Moreover, several of his accomplices, Valery Nosov, Vladislav Telepnev, Yelena Kuznetsova are already serving sentences and the criminal case against Kuznetsov's ex-wife Zhanna Bulakh was already passed to be tried in absentia, as she is hiding in the United States of America, with which the Russian Federation does not have an extradition treaty. At the same time, the Russian investigators point out professionalism of French colleagues displayed in search and detention of Kuznetsov. Right after the

Chairman of the Russian Investigative Committee personally discussed legal assistance in criminal investigation against Kuznetsov in 2013, the French law-enforcement agencies promptly found and detained him. The French law-enforcement agencies and a judge of Aix-en-Provence, who made first decision to extradite him to Russia had no doubts back then that Kuznetsov was guilty of crimes.

But further development of the situation and extradition that lasts has lasted for years shows that not only legal consensus is needed for extradition of the accused. It is likely that both the political situation and nuances of the current laws, which are allowing Kuznetsov's lawyers to manipulate justice using European values and human rights as a cover, are preventing the final decision from being made, despite the fact that he committed a crime against his country and basically against hundreds of his fellow citizens. None the less, we do hope that common sense, triumph of French laws and justice to Aleksei Kuznetsov will ultimately provide unavailability of punishment, stated not only in the Russian legislation.

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