
Smuggling disguised as diplomat's personal belongings stopped in Pskov Region

North-Western Transport Investigations Directorate of Russia's Investigative Committee have opened a criminal case against an official of Sebezhsy customs of Pskov Customs Department of North-Western Customs Department of Federal Customs Service Yelena Fomina, 39, suspected of a crime under part 1 of article 286 of RF Criminal Code (exceeding official powers).

According to investigators, on 24 March 2012 two dual-purpose vehicles Volkswagen Crafter arrived at customs registration and control point of the international vehicle checkpoint Burachki of Sebezhsy Customs "to enter the Russian Federation".

For customs registration the drivers of the two vehicles gave to customs inspector Yelena Fomina the documents of consular department of RF Embassy in FRG stating that those two vehicles were travelling from Berlin to Moscow carrying personal belongings of employee of RF Embassy in FRG; passenger customs declaration for the vehicles; passenger customs declaration on behalf of the embassy employee on the things being transported.

According to the said documents the vehicles allegedly were transporting personal belongings of an employee of RF Embassy in FRG: car spare parts, clothes, shoes, underclothing, furniture, kitchen utensils, personal care items, household appliances – all of which are not subject to customs duties (in line with the Customs Agreement between RF, Belorussia and Kazakhstan).

Establishing the fact that passenger customs declaration on behalf of the embassy employee was given by an unauthorized person (a driver), Fomina did not refused to register it, but unlawfully registered the declaration on behalf of the embassy employee without his presence and without necessary documents and information on the goods transportation, by this she unlawfully issued a permission for the goods transported to enter the Russian Federation.

After passing a checkpoint the vehicles were stopped by officials of Border Service and Search and Investigation Department of Sebzhsy Customs. To identify the goods the officials examined the cargo and found both vehicles were transporting goods not specified in the declaration and shipping documents, but not personal belongings subject to the category "for private use, imported by diplomats". Instead there were portable computers, electronic books, women's and children's shoes and clothes, slats, spices, medications, beer and wine in glass bottles and even lingerie of various brands, colors and sizes. In all, 33 items of commercial goods obviously not for private use by

diplomats. The weight of silver jewellery alone exceeded 2 centners.

Customs duties for these goods were not paid on especially large scale – more than 9 million rubles.

Criminal case was opened against the individuals who had evaded payment of duties over crimes under part 3 of article 30, paragraph “d” of part 2 of article 194 of RF Criminal Code (the case is presently being investigated by the department for investigation of especially important cases).

At present necessary investigation and search operations are under way. Investigation is to be continued.

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