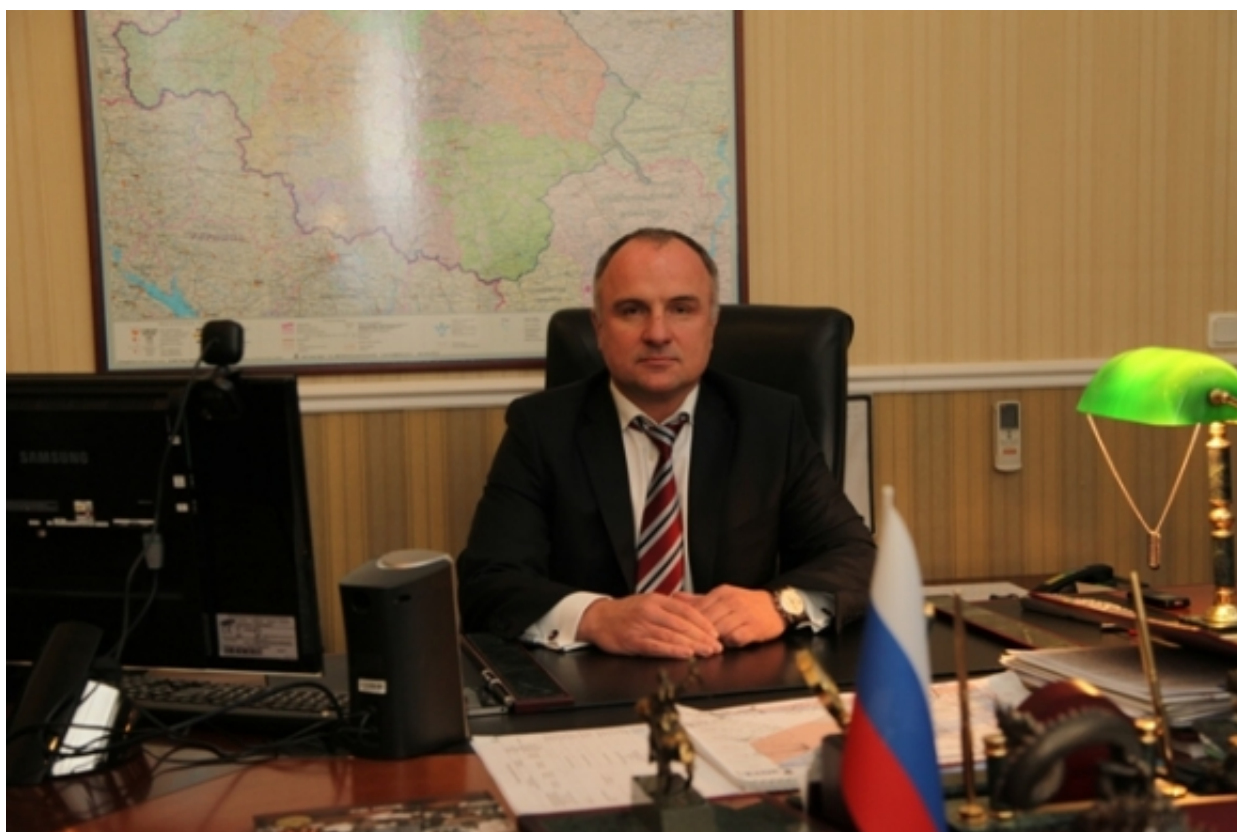

**Interview by Head of Moscow Inter-Regional Transport
Investigations Directorate Oleg Tushmalov to news agency RIA
Novosti**



Transport Investigations Directorate of the Russia's' Investigative Committee: Jewelries are transported most often

Head of Moscow Inter-Regional Transport Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee Oleg Tushmalov told about setting up a new department to combat customs related crimes and investigating the most high-profile corruption crimes, including "case of Sandrukyan".

Passengers of planes arriving this year in the Russian capital are becoming more often to be caught by law enforcement trying to illegally import jewelries and precious stones.

Oleg Tushmalov, Head of Moscow Inter-Regional Transport Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee told about setting up a new department to combat customs related crimes and investigating the most high-profile corruption crimes, including "case of Sandrukyan", in the interview to RIA Novosti correspondent Yekaterina Nabirkina.

- Mr. Tushmalov, recently it has been often reported on large batches of jewelries and precious stones being illegally imported in Russia through Moscow airports. In what way do you suppress such crimes, after the criminal article "smuggling" has been abolished?

- In the first half of 2012 a special investigations department for customs crimes was set up in the directorate. The department employs the most highly-qualified investigators having skills in investigating crimes in the area of foreign economic activity.

Over the period the department operates we have developed tight cooperation with operational divisions of Federal Customs Service, Federal Security Service and Ministry of Internal Affairs. In addition we have set up interagency working groups in charge of improving system of measures taken to reveal, suppress, investigate and prevent crimes.

The thing is, that the investigating practice gives controversial interpretation of norms in criminal and administrative legislation as to prosecuting physical persons for evading customs payments while transporting across the border expensive goods for personal use.

The law states that physical persons can freely import in Russia for their personal use objects the cost of which does not exceed ten thousand euros and total weight of 50 kilograms.

Considering free procedure of goods circulation, Russian citizens and foreigners disregard the rules. They still take the “green corridor” even if they have on them material values the cost of which is higher than that provided by the law for free import.

- As of today, what is the total cost of jewels that have been sized in the airports since the beginning of the year?

- Since the beginning of the year Moscow Inter-Regional Transport Investigations Directorate has been investigating 14 criminal cases over illicit transportation of jewels, expensive watches, precious and semiprecious stones through the “green corridor”. The total cost of jewels seized during personal search is more than 238 million rubles. And that’s jewelries alone, which make up the bulk of illegally imported goods.

Customs officers in Domodedovo airport have found a watch worth 54.5 million rubles carried by a Russian. As an example I can tell about a case, which is now under inquiry by our investigators against a 63-year-old USA citizen. In early September this year he arrived by a flight from Switzerland to Domodedovo airport, where while crossing the border, he took the “green corridor” and was stopped by a customs inspector. During personal search the inspector found more than 160 jewelries and watches worth in total more than 25 million rubles. This way, he evaded paying customs duties of over 8.5 million rubles.

- Employees of the new department investigate cases not only against passengers, but against customs officials as well.

- As an example I can tell about a case against two customs officials – an investigator and an operative. They decided to get rich on other’s property and during a search carried out in the office of a company, they seized many objects and documents relating to activity of the company. They invited their acquaintances as witnesses, who were to have acted under instructions of the investigator and not to have asked any questions. Part of the documents the perpetrators returned for almost 1.3 million rubles. But they thought it was not enough and the investigator and the operative

again through the witnesses demanded a bribe of 200 thousand US dollars for giving back all the documents and some molybdenum powder they had seized earlier.

All persons involved in this crime are proved guilty. The mediators have already pleaded guilty, both the investigator and the operative have been prosecuted.

- The bribery is also caused by red tape in registering the goods at the customs as businessmen want to import their cargoes as quickly as possible.

- There are such cases in our practice. Any participant of foreign economic activity is interested in quicker decision on classification of goods imported. This is prerogative of Commodity Classification Office of the Russia's Federal Customs Service.

Under such circumstances, of course, it is easier for a businessman to give an official a bribe and get the decision he needs, than to wait a term specified for that.

As another example I can tell about a case we were investigating. In November 2011, in Moscow

First Deputy Head of Commodity Classification Office of the Russia's Federal Customs Service received a bribe of four thousand dollars. But for what? Just for giving his subordinates an order to prepare the decision on goods classification as fast as possible. It seems to be trifle, but this how defects in civil consciousness are caused. Officers of the Russia's Investigative Committee and Federal Security Service stopped criminal activity of the official. Actions of the accused were classified as part 2 of article 290 of the RF Criminal Code – Bribe-taking by a functionary, in person in the form of money on a large scale for actions in favor of a bribe-giver which are part of the functionary's official powers.

- Mr. Tushmalov, continuing the conversation of corruption I can't help but ask about the case against a high-ranking official of the transport police Eduard Sandrukyan. Investigators have given no details about the fraud. What stage the investigation is now on?

- At present investigation against Eduard Sandrukyan is completed. We have forwarded the case with indictment to the prosecutor's office.

The crime was as follows. Some people asked Sandrukyan through his former subordinate Myasishchev to assist in a criminal case. Sandrukyan though had no opportunity to help or assist in making procedural decision on the case, did receive 650 thousand US dollars for this assumed help. That was the price he set for his "labor", but wasn't going to do anything. As it was earlier reported, Sandrukyan was detained at the moment the money was given in the Exhibition Center Krokus City Hall.

During investigation he gave detailed and consistent evidence and requested for the case being tried in a special order.

- It was originally reported that Sandrukyan was detained when receiving 900 thousand dollars.

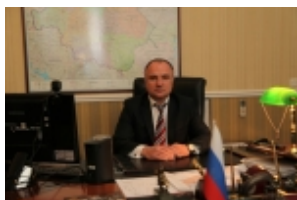
- Myasishchev brought 900 thousand, but Sandrukyan allowed Myasishchev to take part of the sum (250 thousand dollars) to himself. Myasishchev was assisting to investigators and helped to expose his former superior.

- There was some information in media that the crime could have involved Sandrukyan's son. Can you give any comments on that?

- This information is not true. After receiving the money Sandrukyan asked his son to take the bag with money into the car, and he did. His son didn't know about criminal actions of his father. There was a pre-investigating check carried out over his son. Based on its results we decided to refuse to launch a criminal case as there were no elements of crime in his actions.

It should be said that investigators checked the version on involvement of other persons, but it was not confirmed. It was established, and that is objectively confirmed by the materials of the criminal case, that Sandrukyan committed swindling and was going to take all the money to himself.

Изображения



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