

Germany Charges Austrian With Spying for Russia

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German federal prosecutors have charged a 54-year-old Austrian man on suspicion of spying for Russia to obtain sensitive material on helicopter technology.

The prosecutors' office said Wednesday that it believed the man had worked for the Foreign Intelligence Service, or SVR, between 1997 and 2002 and received at least \$10,500 for passing on civilian and military secrets about helicopters.

"He was also supposed to put his SVR contact in touch with professionals in this field from German-speaking countries," prosecutors said in a statement, adding that he had made contact between the SVR and two engineers from a German helicopter maker.

A spokesman for prosecutors said the man, who is due to be tried in Munich, could face a fine or a prison sentence of up to five years if found guilty of the charges. He declined to say which firms were involved in the case.

The man, identified as Harald Alois S., was not in custody because prosecutors did not believe

that he would try to flee, the spokesman said.

Earlier news reports identified the suspect as Harald Sodnikar, a helicopter technician in Austria's armed forces who is suspected of playing a role in a 2007 espionage scandal involving German engineer Werner Greipl, a former employee of Eurocopter, the helicopter subsidiary of EADS, and his Russian contact, identified as Vladimir Vozhzhov, a one-time trade attache at the Russian Embassy in Vienna and former official at the Federal Space Agency.

A Munich court in 2008 convicted Greipl of selling helicopter plans to an SVR agent and handed him an 11-month suspended sentence.

(Reuters, MT)

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