

White House Says \$290M Too Much for Office

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The White House told the Federal Property Management Agency not to pay \$290 million for quarters on the Arbat, above. **Vladimir Filonov**

The government is telling the Federal Property Management Agency to find cheaper digs for an international trade commission rather than shell out \$290 million for a building on the Arbat.

The White House recommended that the property agency either buy a building with a lower price or just rent office space for the commission, Kommersant reported Thursday.

The Eurasian Economic Commission was formed in December by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan to direct the Customs Union between them, which took effect Jan. 1. Immediately after Viktor Khristenko was appointed head of the commission, he asked the federal government to arrange headquarters for it, Kommersant said.

The Economic Development Ministry then proposed buying 1 Arbatskaya Ploshchad from the co-owner of the Region investment company for 8.4 billion rubles (\$290 million).

The high price was the main reason for the government's change of heart, Kommersant reported, anonymously citing an official involved in finding a home for the commission.

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