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Prosecutors Investigate EnBW, Bykov

By The Moscow Times

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The Philippsburg nuclear power plant, run by publicly traded electric utilities company EnBW

BERLIN — Seven former and current managers of EnBW Energie Baden-Wuerttemberg are being investigated over payments of 59 million euros ($74 million) made to Bykov Group in Russia.

The suspects are being investigated on suspicion of tax evasion and breach of trust, Peter Lintz, a spokesman for prosecutors in Mannheim, Germany, said in an e-mailed statement Friday. The investigators are looking at payments and tax declarations from 2001 to 2008.

The case involves Andrei Bykov, a former company lobbyist who sued EnBW in January in response to a 120 million euro arbitration claim the company filed against him.

EnBW's press office didn't immediately return a call seeking comment.

Bykov is seeking a court ruling declaring that he doesn't owe anything to EnBW, as the money was paid under sham contracts initiated by the company. He was hired by EnBW to help

acquire stakes in Russian gas fields, Bykov claims in his suit, according to a January statement on the website of the regional court in Karlsruhe.

Handelsblatt reported on June 12 that Bykov sent about 200 million euros to Russia through sham EnBW contracts over several years, citing an interview with him. At least 130 million euros were used to "forge political relationships" for EnBW.

Half of that money was paid to the Moscow-based St. Nicholas Foundation, which used it to support cultural activities, including churches, orchestras and schools, as a way to foster EnBW's opportunities in Russia, Handelsblatt cited Bykov as saying. He kept the other 65 million euros as his pay, according to the report.

EnBW rejected the allegations in a statement on June 14. The company started arbitration proceedings against Bykov when he didn't fulfill his contractual obligations, EnBW said.

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