

German Court Sends 'Russian Spies' to Jail

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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STUTTGART, Germany — A German court has delivered its verdict in an international espionage case, finding a couple guilty of spying for Russia and sentencing them to over five years behind bars.

The court found the couple — known by their aliases, Andreas and Heidrun Anschlag — guilty of spying for Russia and sentenced them to prison terms of 6 1/2 and 5 1/2 years, respectively.

Prosecutors had demanded a longer jail term for the husband (7 1/2 years) and a shorter sentence for the wife (4 1/2 years).

The court also seized their property and ordered them to pay a 500,000 euro (\$651,000) fine.

Andreas Anschlag, 54, and his wife Heidrun, 48, were arrested in Germany in October 2011. Last September, they were charged with "secret agent activity" and "forgery of documents."

Neither defendant admitted to spying for Russia. Russia has not confirmed that they were its agents but has been providing consular assistance to them during the trial since it started in January.

According to trial documents, the couple arrived in Germany between 1988 and 1990. They spoke with Eastern European accents but claimed they were born in South America and had grown up in Austria.

Germany's Die Welt newspaper reported that their mission was to recruit and handle other agents who worked in Germany and neighboring countries and that they passed sensitive information on EU and NATO plans collected by their agents to Moscow.

The couple's most high-profile alleged recruit to be publicly identified was Dutch diplomat Raymond Poeteray, who was detained in April last year.

Poeteray, who was sentenced to 12 years in jail by a Dutch court in April of this year, allegedly received 90,000 euros (\$117,000) for passing confidential information to Russia.

Prosecutors said dead letter drops were used to deliver "secret" files to Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) in Moscow, after which the Anshlags apparently received further instructions by radio.

The German government earlier appealed to Russia to exchange the Anshlags for agents who had been working for a news outlet with close ties to Germany. The deal was never struck, but there has been media speculation that the couple might be exchanged after the trial.

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