Baumgertner in Moscow Detention Center Following Extradition From Belarus

By The Moscow Times

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Head of fertilizer producer Uralkali Vladislav Baumgertner, who was arrested in late August by Belarussian authorities and had been under house arrest in Minsk, has been placed in a Moscow detention center following his extradition to Russia, Federal Penitentiary Service spokeswoman Kristina Belousova said Friday.

The plane carrying Baumgertner landed at Domodedovo airport at 1 a.m., a source familiar with the situation told Interfax. Upon arrival he was met up by Russian court marshal who escorted him to a pre-trial detention center in Moscow, the source said.

Authorities kept the exact time and place of Baumgertner's arrival secret to avoid unnecessary media attention, the source added.

The source did not rule out that Baumgertner will be officially charged on Friday in a criminal

case opened against him in Russia.

The case against Baumgertner is being investigated by the Investigative Committee's Main Directorate. Russian authorities accuse the Uralkali CEO of "using his position in the company to generate profit for himself and other persons against the company's interest."

In October, Moscow's Basmanny District Court issued a warrant for Baumgertner's arrest in absentia.

Baumgertner was arrested in Minsk on Aug. 26 and charged with exceeding authority and abuse of office. Belarussian authorities claimed that the actions of Baumgertner and other senior executives of state–run potash producer Belaruskali had resulted in damages of up to $100 million to the country's economy, rocked the global potash industry and threatened Belarus with serious financial losses.

On Sept. 25 Baumgertner was released from the KGB prison in Minsk and placed under house arrest, where he remained until his extradition to Russia.

Russian law enforcement authorities submitted a request to representatives of the Belarussian Prosecutor General's office on Oct. 22 to extradite Baumgertner to stand trial in the Russian Federation. On Thursday, Belarussian authorities announced their decision to satisfy the request and extradite Baumgertner.

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