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Ponomaryov's Skolkovo Fine Appeal Rejected

By The Moscow Times

November 22, 2013



The Moscow City Court on Friday upheld a lower court verdict ordering State Duma Deputy Ilya Ponomaryov to pay damages to the Skolkovo Foundation for failing to meet contract terms, but the lawmaker said he would appeal again.

Moscow's Gagarinsky District Court had ruled this summer that Ponomaryov had failed to deliver lectures for which Skolkovo paid him $300,000, and ordered the deputy to pay 2.7 million rubles ($82,000) in damages. The Moscow City Court upheld the verdict, the lawmaker wrote in his LiveJournal blog.

Ponomaryov, who left the A Just Russia party in October, said he would appeal to the Supreme Court.

Ponomaryov argued that the payment he received from Skolkovo wasn't for lectures, as the foundation claimed, but was to cover his "expenses" in hiring experts, paying for their air

travels and hotels, and for organizing promotional events.

"I am one of the authors of the Skolkovo project, and my task was to arrange communication with the innovation community, with Russian innovators and foreign research scientists," Ponomaryov said.

"I had worked for Skolkovo without pay until the volume of my expenses had exceeded all the reasonable limits," he added.

Skolkovo said that Ponomaryov was paid for 10 lectures, but only one of them met the foundation's requirements. Others were off topic or consisted only of a short introduction, the foundation said.

Ponomaryov received $300,000 from the $750,000 that Skolkovo's records show as having been paid to him. Skolkovo's deputy president Alexei Beltyukov has been charged with embezzlement and is suspected of pocketing the rest of the money.

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