

Con Artists Caught Selling Moscow Deputy Mayor Job for \$4 Million

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Con artists busted in cafe selling 'deputy mayor' job.

A pair of con artists was busted in a Moscow cafe trying to sell the top job in the city's lucrative real estate sector, that of Deputy Mayor Marat Khusnullin, for 3 million euros (\$4.1 million), police said Monday.

The fraudsters — a man and a woman — were caught red-handed accepting a 500,000-euro payment from a police informant in a Shokoladnitsa cafe on southwest Moscow's Profsoyuznaya Ulitsa, police said. The duo now faces a decade in prison for fraud.

The pair, who police say did not actually have any connections in City Hall, had promised to get the current deputy mayor, in charge of granting permission for new construction projects throughout Moscow, to be fired within three weeks.

Khusnullin had not commented as of Monday evening, but his department's press office was cited by the Izvestia newspaper as rueing that "citizens possessing such large sums of money could be so naive and gullible."

Russia ranked 127th of 177 countries in the most recent corruption index by renowned watchdog Transparency International.

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