

Brigitte Bardot Pays for Russian 'Alcoholic' Bears' Romanian Rehab

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A pair of "alcoholic bears" from Sochi will travel to rehab in Romania to overcome an addiction.

A pair of "alcoholic bears" living at a restaurant in Russia's Sochi will travel to Romania for rehabilitation to overcome an addiction caused by customers slipping them too many drinks, a news report said.

The cost of the bears' treatment will be covered by two animal rights groups, France's Brigitte Bardot Foundation and Britain's Big Hearts Foundation, said head of the London-based group Anna Kogan, news agency TASS reported Tuesday.

The bears will travel to a park set up outside of Brasov, Romania, to help animals that have been mistreated by humans, Kogan was quoted as saying.

The bears had been locked up together in a small enclosure for some 20 years outside of a Georgian restaurant in Sochi.

The Big Hearts Foundation said in a Dec. 2014 press release that the bears were fed alcohol by diners, citing the restaurant owner as having said, “beer is good for the bears because of the Sochi climate.” The bears' enclosure is filled with broken glass, trash and the smell of decay, the press release said.

A Russian court ordered the bears' confiscation from a restaurant earlier this month on the basis of the poor conditions the bears had endured. But the animals will continue to live at the restaurant until March, when the court order comes into effect, TASS reported.

Veterinarians believe that with proper care the bears will be able to beat their addiction, the report added.

Russia's Nature Ministry official Sergei Zenkov told TASS that his agency had no objections to the Sochi bears going into rehab, but added that the animal rights groups organizing the treatment would have to take care of the necessary paperwork.

Kogan said that after learning of the court decision her organization tried to find a new home for the bears in Russia, but the country's zoos refused to take the alcoholic bears.

The 60-hectare park in Romania is home to about 70 bears — many of whom have in the past been exhibited as restaurant or roadside attractions, or kept as pets.

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