The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Frenchman Smuggles Russian Wife Into EU in Suitcase

By Peter Spinella

March 16, 2015



A Frenchman was caught smuggling his Russian wife into Poland in a suitcase.

A 60-year-old Frenchman, apparently desperate to bring his young Russian wife to the European Union, was caught smuggling the woman into Poland in a suitcase, media reports said.

Polish news site Wiadomosci24 reported that the woman lacked the proper documents to enter the Schengen zone, so the couple decided she should hide in a large suitcase during a train journey from Moscow to Nice, France.

After crossing the Belarussian border into the Polish town of Terespol, customs officers became suspicious of the oversized luggage. Inside it they found the scrunched-up woman.

"Foreigners try to cross the border illegally in many different ways, but this is the first time I've encountered a person hiding in a suitcase," customs spokesman Dariusz Sienicki was

quoted as saying.

Wiadomosci24 reported that the two faced up to three years in prison for the ill-fated smuggling attempt.

But French newspaper Le Figaro later cited Sienicki as saying that the woman, who was about 30 years old, actually had the right to enter the Schengen zone and would not have been stopped had she not been hiding in a suitcase.

According to Le Figaro, the couple was allowed to return to Belarus without being criminally charged.

While this may have been the first time Sienicki had heard of a woman being smuggled in a suitcase, the incident certainly isn't the most bizarre alleged smuggling attempt in recent Russian history.

In February, Russia's natural resources and environment minister, Sergei Donskoi, accused unnamed foreign saboteurs of smuggling moths into Sochi at least a year ago in a bid to wreak havoc during the Olympic Games.

He said that the moths have devastated local trees, and that there is currently no way to exterminate them.

In the past few years, inmates in Russian prisons have been caught using cats to smuggle in a wide range of contraband, from mobile phones to heroin.

The cats were reportedly raised by the inmates and set loose, ultimately returning with the desired goods taped to their backs or hidden under their collars.

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