

# Russian Ex-Minister's Swiss Accounts Frozen in Embezzlement Case – Report

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Yelena Skrynnik

Swiss authorities have blocked bank accounts belonging to former Russian Agriculture Minister Yelena Skrynnik as part of an investigation into money laundering, the Interfax news agency reported Wednesday, citing an unidentified source close to the matter.

Assets worth 60 million Swiss francs (\$61 million) were frozen after an order by the Swiss prosecutor's office, the source said.

According to the agency, the move was connected to an investigation into Rosagroleasing, a state company that leases equipment to Russia's agricultural sector and was run by Skrynnik before she became agriculture minister in 2009, a position she held for three years.

The case concerns 1.125 billion rubles (\$18 million) that was apparently embezzled from Rosagroleasing by officials and businesspeople. The source told Interfax that investigators

were probing the origin of \$140 million deposited on Skrynnik's accounts in Swiss banks between 2007 and 2012.

The ex-minister, who currently lives in France, is classified as a witness in the case, the source said.

In an interview with the Russian News Service radio station on Wednesday, Skrynnik denied the report.

“It's total lies. I don't have that sort of money,” she said. She declined to say whether she had foreign bank accounts.

In a related incident, Interfax reported on Tuesday that the Russian Prosecutor General's Office had asked Swiss authorities to seize 12 million Swiss francs (\$12 million) on the accounts of a former deputy agriculture minister, Alexei Bazhanov, who worked as Skrynnik's deputy for two years.

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