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Former Russian Deputy Prime Minister Kokh Arrested in Absentia

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Alfred Kokh

Former Russian deputy prime minister Alfred Kokh has been arrested in absentia on smuggling charges, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday, citing an unidentified source.

Kokh is accused of "smuggling items of cultural value" and is "internationally wanted," Interfax reported.

Kokh was accused of smuggling when he tried to leave for Germany with a painting that he declared was worth about 18,000 rubles ($230), Interfax reported.

"The customs officials decided it was some incredible work of art. They let him go to Germany, but opened a criminal case against him," an unidentified source close to Kokh told the RBC news agency.

In September last year, Kokh said he was charged with smuggling a painting worth 197,400 rubles ($2,500), Interfax reported.

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