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Ex-Austrian Minister Who Waltzed With Putin Moves to St. Petersburg With Ponies

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Karin Kneissl's ponies seen arriving at Pulkovo Airport in St. Petersburg. **Alena Tkachenko Horse Club**

A former Austrian foreign minister who danced with Russian President Vladimir Putin at her wedding has moved to St. Petersburg along with her two ponies, according to the independent news outlet The Insider.

Karin Kneissl will head the Geopolitical Observatory for Russia's Key Issues (GORKI), a research center at St. Petersburg State University that was established in March and tasked with advancing Russian foreign policy.

Accompanying her in the move was a pair of ponies she transported with the help of a Russian aircraft sanctioned by the U.S. and Ukraine, The Insider reported, citing the pro-war Telegram channel Fighterbomber.

"The horses are in good health," the Leningrad region's veterinary service said after

inspecting Kneissl's ponies over the weekend.

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The Ilyushin Il-76 cargo plane identified in photos was placed under U.S. and Ukrainian sanctions in May for transporting Wagner mercenaries, The Insider said.

The outlet added that a local horse club took in the ponies southeast of St. Petersburg, saying the animals had crossed six state borders and were originally from Austria.

Kneissl has been living in Russia at least since this past summer, when she temporarily took up residence in a village southeast of Moscow.

"I co-founded the GORKI center and run it," Kneissl told Russia's state-run news agency TASS on Tuesday.

"Since there's a lot of work and it requires a lot of attention, I can't do it in passing. So I decided to move to St. Petersburg," Kneissl said.

Kneissl, Austria's foreign minister from 2017-19, gained notoriety for waltzing arm-in-arm with Putin at her 2018 wedding in Austria.

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