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France Hands Over Russian Businessman to Lithuania

By AFP

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Russian businessman Vladimir Antonov leaves Westminister Magistrates Court in London on Nov. 25, 2011. **Carl Court / AFP**

French authorities have handed over the former owner of Lithuania's Snoras bank to the authorities in Vilnius, the country's prosecutor's office said on Monday.

Russian businessman Vladimir Antonov, a former owner of English football club Portsmouth, was arrested in the Morbihan area of western France under a European arrest warrant in December last year.

He was transferred from custody in France to Lithuania. A French court ruled early last month that he could be extradited.

Anatonov was convicted by a court in Lithuania in 2024 and sentenced to 10.5 years in prison for embezzlement, squandering of funds, fraudulent bankruptcy, handling illegally acquired

property, fraudulent accounting and document forgery.

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Another Snoras executive was also convicted in the case.

The offenses date back to the period 2008 to 2011, when the Russian controlled Snoras, which at the time was Lithuania's fourth-largest bank.

According to the arrest warrant, losses were estimated to be at least 478 million euros ($557 million).

Antonov was held under an initial arrest warrant in 2011 in Britain, then released.

In 1998, when Russia was hit by one of its worst financial crises, Antonov, then aged 23, bought a small bank with his father.

In the early 2000s, he went on to take control of a series of banking institutions in Russia and abroad, including Snoras and Latvia's Latvijas Krajbanka.

His wealth was estimated at $380 million in 2011.

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