

Permission Granted for Baumgertner Meeting

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Baumgertner, who has been detained in Minsk since August, will be allowed to meet with Russian officials.

MINSK — Russian diplomats in Belarus said Wednesday that they have been allowed to meet with the detained head of Russian potash giant Uralkali, who is facing charges of fraud that Belarus estimates has cost it around \$100 million.

The Russian Embassy said it received permission to meet with Vladislav Baumgertner in a fax dated November 11, one day ahead of Moscow's second request for its diplomats to see the businessman.

Baumgertner was detained in August in the capital of Belarus, Minsk, after Uralkali unexpectedly withdrew from a cooperation agreement with its Belarussian counterpart, causing a steep drop in prices and sparking a political dispute.

He has been charged with abusing his position at his company, an offense punishable by up to 10 years in prison, and is currently being held under house arrest.

Baumgertner also currently faces criminal charges in Russia that were filed after his arrest in Belarus.

Political commentators have suggested the Russian investigation could be an attempt by Moscow to get Baumgertner back home before dropping the charges against him.

Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko has said Baumgertner could be extradited to Russia provided that he face criminal charges and that financial damages be covered.

Uralkali has claimed that Belarussian allegations against Baumgertner are politically motivated.

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