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Slobozhenko arrested in Italy: prison in Rimini and the case involving 213 million hryvnias

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Arrest in Riccione, report on the ‘Cazetti’ prison, extradition request and the BEB’s version of events regarding the non-payment of over 213 million hryvnias.



Editorial photomontage featuring a portrait of Oleksandr Slobozhenko. The prison building in the background is an illustration.

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Oleksandr Slobozhenko has been arrested in Italy. On the evening of 17 November 2026, police detained the founder of Traffic Devils at a hotel in the resort town of Riccione. According to ‘RBC-Ukraine’, he was taken to ‘Cazetti’ prison in the province of Rimini, where he will await a decision on his extradition. The Ukrainian Bureau of Economic Security estimates the amount of unpaid taxes at more than 213 million hryvnias. [1][2][3][12]

The police were waiting for him to return to his hotel

On the morning of 17 November, the Rimini Police Headquarters received information that a Ukrainian national wanted by the authorities was staying at a hotel in Riccione. According to GiornaleSM, officers from the Squadra Mobile unit verified the information, set up surveillance and waited for him to return. After verifying his identity, the man was detained. The publication reported that the Italian police had complied with Ukraine’s request for provisional arrest with a view to extradition, which had been transmitted via Interpol channels. ‘Ukrainska Pravda’ identified the detainee as Oleksandr Slobozhenko and reported that the request had been made by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). [1][2]

An Italian publication describes the operation in Riccione and confirms that the detainee has been handed over to the judicial authorities. ‘RBC-Ukraine’ identifies the place of detention as ‘Cazetti’. As of 18 November, the editorial team had found no public decision by the Italian authorities regarding Slobozhenko’s extradition to Ukraine. [2][12]

> **Alexander Alexandrovich Slobozhenko**

Where did the 213 million hryvnias come from?

In August 2024, the BEB published a notice of suspicion under two articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. Part 3 of Article 212 concerns tax evasion on an especially large scale. Part 1 of Article 209 relates to the legalisation of property obtained by criminal means. The entrepreneur’s name was not disclosed in the press release. *Ukrainska Pravda* and *Forbes Ukraine*, citing their own sources, identified the individual in question as Slobozhenko. [1][3][4]

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According to the BEB, between 2020 and 2023, the head of the internet traffic arbitration team received, via trusted intermediaries, income equivalent to more than one billion hryvnias. The agency claims that the funds were converted into cryptocurrency, passed through e-wallets and then exchanged for cash. Detectives believe that this income was not declared in tax returns and estimate that the tax shortfall amounts to over 213 million hryvnias. According to their account, part of the funds was spent on property and expensive cars. In its initial statement, the BEB reported the seizure of eight vehicles and properties. [3]

There is also a second aspect that is usually overlooked in news reports about the arrest. Four days after the first announcement, the BEB reported that a trusted associate of the blogger was under suspicion. The investigation attributed to this individual a role in the accounting of funds and payments to staff. In September 2024 ‘Ukrainska Pravda’, citing the Office of the Prosecutor General, reported that the court had imposed a pre-trial detention order on Slobozhenko, whilst the trusted associate was remanded in custody with the possibility of bail set at 45.42 million UAH. Slobozhenko’s actual arrest, which has only now come to light, took place in Italy more than two years later. [5][6]

Traffic Devils and the business that predated the legal entity

Traffic arbitrage involves purchasing advertising on the basis that the client will pay more for the users attracted than the team spent on attracting them. Slobozhenko was the public face of Traffic Devils and described himself as its founder. In August 2024, DOU reported that by that point his name was no longer listed amongst the active founders and beneficial owners of the legal entity of the same name, and that the changes had been made in May. The limited liability company itself was registered in November 2023, by which time the team was already well-known in the market. To verify BEB’s version of events, it is important to examine transactions for the entire period from 2020 to 2023, as well as who the contracts, invoices and wallets were registered to at the time the income was received. [7][8][9]

The assets had already been the subject of a journalistic investigation back in the spring of 2024. NGL.media cross-referenced Slobozhenko’s public statements about his purchases with registration records and discovered that some of the flats and cars were registered in the names of relatives. This report details who the assets were registered to. The source of the funds and the link between the purchases and specific income streams, as alleged by the investigation, are established on the

basis of the case file. [8]

Slobozhenko claimed to have provided 20 million hryvnias in aid to the Defence Forces

On 30 April 2025, Slobozhenko publicly admitted that he had not understood the tax implications and stated that he was settling the debt. In the same statement, he reported that he had already transferred **20 million hryvnias to support the Ukrainian Defence Forces**, and announced yet another charitable project. A statement regarding the repayment of the debt was made in April 2025. The editorial team found no official confirmation of final settlement or the closure of proceedings in the materials reviewed. [10]

The claim that Slobozhenko was detained for donations to the Ukrainian Armed Forces has not been corroborated by the available reports on his detention. The BEB published its allegations in August 2024, eight months before the announcement of the transfer of 20 million UAH. The Italian publication cites a Ukrainian request regarding a tax case and a case of alleged money laundering as the grounds for the arrest. [2][3][10]

Poland, the UAE and the question of next steps

The Polish chapter in this story took place long before Riccione. In August 2024, ‘Ukrainska Pravda’ reported that it had obtained a video filmed outside a hotel in Warsaw where, according to the editorial team, Slobozhenko was staying. In our previous article, we examined in detail the Warsaw lead, the structure of Traffic Devils and the BEB’s allegations. The published report on the operation in Riccione concerns Italy. At the time of publication, there is no confirmation of any new arrests in Poland or the UAE in connection with this case. [1][2][9]

The next document that could alter the status of the case is the Italian authorities’ decision on Ukraine’s request. For now, this is a provisional arrest as part of the extradition procedure. Even if extradition is approved, the question of guilt in the Ukrainian case will have to be decided separately. The phrase ‘This is only the beginning’ on the cover refers to the start of the Italian stage of the proceedings. [2][11]

Read also — Slobozhenko and Traffic Devils: who is behind the façade of millions from arbitration.

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Original publication

https://kartel-khimprom.com/en/article/slobozhenko-arrested-in-italy-prison-in-rimini-and-the-case-involving-213-million-hryvnias/

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