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‘Slobozhenko Drop’: Traffic Devils, Diya City and a tax bill of 213 million hryvnias

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Oleksandr Slobozhenko found himself at a crossroads where Traffic Devils’ public success story collided with an investigation into his personal income. The BEB described cryptocurrency transactions, trusted individuals and over 213 million hryvnias...



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Oleksandr Slobozhenko. Editorial photomontage with the headline ‘The Slobozhenko Drop’. ‘Drop’ is an editorial term for the story; it is not a status established by a court. Over 213 million hryvnias — the tax claim according to the BEB. The hotel, car, screen and documents in the background are for illustrative purposes only. Portrait reference: dev.ua publication.

Oleksandr Slobozhenko found himself at a crossroads where Traffic Devils’ public success story clashed with an investigation into his personal income. The BEB detailed cryptocurrency transactions, trusted individuals and over 213 million hryvnias in unpaid taxes. The entrepreneur himself later acknowledged the tax issue and promised to settle the debt. His arrest in Italy in November once again made this dispute international news, but did not resolve the main question: who exactly received the income and how was it declared?

The phrase ‘Slobozhenko Drop’ in the headline is an editorial characterisation of the story about payments and authorised representatives, not the name of the role established by the court. The official substance of the allegations is more precise and serious than any label: the investigation cited tax evasion and money laundering. At the same time, the company Traffic Devils featured in public discussions as a resident of Diya City. These are different entities and different issues, which must not be conflated for the sake of a sensational narrative about a ‘legalised billion’.

What was in the BEB’s report for August 2024

On 16 August 2024, the Economic Security Bureau announced that a well-known blogger was under suspicionwithout naming names. According to the agency, from 2020 to 2023, he carried out unregistered activities in internet traffic arbitrage, received payments in cryptocurrency, used the wallets of trusted individuals and failed to declare income in excess of one billion hryvnias. The investigation estimated the unpaid taxes at more than 213 million hryvnias.

The report also listed the areas of advertising traffic: gambling, betting, dating and other products. The BEB announced the seizure of eight vehicles and property in Kyiv. The charges cited included Part 3 of Article 212 and Part 1 of Article 209 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. The media published the identification of this blogger as Slobozhenko; this cannot be taken as the surname explicitly stated in the original press release.

In this framework, the tax claim is linked to the alleged recipient of the income. The mere existence of a team of arbitrage traders does not in itself answer the questions of who owned the specific wallets, who entered into the contracts, and over what period the obligation to declare arose. For the investigation, the link between the transactions and an individual is crucial, whilst for public analysis, an accurate reproduction of the agency’s claims is essential.

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How Traffic Devils made money from traffic

In August 2024, Forbes Ukraine linked the case to the founder of Traffic Devils and provided details about the team's business. The publication described the arbitrage model and reported, citing the entrepreneur, that around 90 per cent of revenue came from the gambling sector. This characterisation of the business structure is based on the Forbes publication, not on a proportion of illegal income established by the court.

In arbitration proceedings, the advertising budget, the team's revenue and the owner's personal income may be different figures. Therefore, a high revenue figure alone does not allow one to reconstruct net earnings, total advertising expenditure and the tax calculation. The BEB's enquiry relates to specific transactions and their documentation. Replacing such an investigation with photographs of expensive cars might make for a catchy headline, but it is of no use in understanding the case.

A separate analysis of the public business model can be found in the article on Slobozhenko and Traffic Devils' showcase of millions from arbitration. A key aspect of this story is the shift from an advertising team to the personal financial obligations of its founder. If profits are presented as the result of a collective business venture but are received by an individual, it is the documents relating to the distribution of income that determine the substance of the dispute. The team's name alone does not resolve this issue.

A trustee and a deposit: who was allocated 45.42 million

On 2 September 2024, the BEB published a statement on preventive measures to the arbitrator and his authorised representative. The agency ordered a search for the blogger and his detention. The bail amount of 45,420,000 hryvnias mentioned in that report related to the authorised representative. It is incorrect to attribute this to Slobozhenko himself and to suggest that he could already have been released on such bail.

This episode clearly illustrates how errors arise in reporting: two individuals are mentioned alongside a single substantial sum, after which the reader is presented with a false, unified narrative. A preventive measure always relates to a specific individual and a procedural decision. It is not a fine, a final tax payment or an assessment of total estimated income.

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Similarly, the term ‘trustee’ does not, in itself, reveal the nature of each transaction. Managing a wallet, holding assets and receiving income are different actions. Their actual role must be established by the investigation and then assessed by the court. In the publicly described case, it is precisely this set of functions that is important; therefore, the word ‘drop’ is no substitute for either documents or legal classification.

What Slobozhenko admitted and what this does not prove

In DOU publication dated 1 May 2025 analysed the entrepreneur’s video statement. The publication reported that Slobozhenko admitted to tax evasion, explained the situation by citing an inadequately structured legal framework, and promised to settle the debt. He also stated his readiness to take responsibility for his actions. This is a significant public statement by the individual concerned himself, rather than merely the version put forward by the law enforcement agencies.

However, an admission regarding a tax issue cannot automatically be extended to an admission of all other allegations. In November 2026, Forbes noted separately that…with the entrepreneur acknowledging the tax claims whilst denying the other allegations. It is important to maintain this distinction: a public explanation and the facts established by the court may differ in scope.

A promise to pay is not, in itself, a payment document. In the publications under review, it describes an intention, but does not in itself confirm the full transfer of 213 million hryvnias, the agreement on the final amount or the termination of proceedings. To report that a tax matter has been resolved, confirmed subsequent decisions would be required. It would be premature to substitute these for a promise.

Diya City: the company’s legal status does not cover past personal income

DOU reported that Traffic Devils became a resident of Diya City in 2023. According to a response from Diya City representatives to this publication, the company met the criteria upon joining, and its status had not been compromised as of the publication date of 1 May 2025. DOU also cited data from Opendatabot regarding Slobozhenko’s ownership and beneficial control up to May 2024. This information relates to a specific date, rather than a check of the register as at November 2026.

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The chronological sequence is crucial. The period cited by the BEB covers 2020–2023, whereas the company's stated status only emerged in 2023. Furthermore, the matter concerns a legal entity, whilst the tax claims are publicly described in relation to an individual. A positive assessment of the company for 2025 does not automatically refute the circumstances surrounding personal transactions in previous years.

A matter of public record	What should not be inferred from this
Traffic Devils' residency in Diya City from 2023, according to DOU	...that all previous personal income had been declared correctly
Slobozhenko's promise to pay taxes	...a debt that has now been paid off in full
A deposit of 45.42 million hryvnias to a trusted individual	Why was such a measure imposed on the entrepreneur himself?
Report of an arrest in Italy	That the extradition has already taken place

This is not a dispute over whether an arbitration company can operate legally. Diya City's public response actually highlights the need to assess its status on its own merits. The dispute concerns how certain revenues were documented, who managed them, and what obligations arose during a specific period. Confusing these issues serves the interests of simplistic promotional or accusatory narratives, but does not reveal the facts.

Italy: a new location, the same subject of the claims

On 18 November 2026, 'Ukrainska Pravda' reported, citing sources within law enforcement agencies, regarding Slobozhenko's detention in Italy on 17 November. Forbes subsequently reported that the Ukrainian authorities were preparing an extradition request. In these reports, the international proceedings are described as an ongoing development; there is no indication from them that the person has been handed over to Ukraine.

We have set out the timeline of the Italian episode in a separate article on the arrest and the 213 million hryvnia case. Here, however, the significance lies elsewhere: the public dispute over taxes has shifted to the question of the suspect's actual involvement in the proceedings. At the same time, neither the place of detention nor media attention can replace an assessment of the origin of the funds, the calculation of taxes and the defence's arguments.

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Behind the story of the luxury cars lies a substantial body of documentation: contracts, wallet details, payment recipients, tax calculations and court rulings. It is these that will determine the outcome of the case. The biography and previous articles are available at The dossier on Oleksandr Oleksandrovych Slobozhenko; new confirmed details regarding payments and the proceedings must be cross-referenced with this timeline, whilst maintaining a distinction between the individual, the company and the public image.

Prepared on 24 November 2026. Links lead to sources of facts and the positions of the parties. The investigation's versions are cited with attribution.

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