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## **The French and European business communities in Russia expect the release of Philippe Delpal and other defendants of the Baring Vostok case. The trial ends this week**

These days, the Baring Vostok trial is nearing its end. Since its beginning in February 2021, the French and European business communities in Russia have repeatedly expressed their solidarity and support for Philippe Delpal and his family as well as for the other defendants. Philippe Delpal was arrested and then imprisoned in the context of the judicial enquiry over a commercial dispute involving the investment fund where he was working. He has been under house arrest since August 2019.

The French and European business communities are concerned about the deterioration of the business climate due to the criminal justice intervention to the case with all the features of a commercial dispute. The investigation may have serious consequences for the freedom of entrepreneurs. This position has been repeatedly reaffirmed in court hearings, where representatives of the French and European community have constantly been present. Nevertheless, the qualification of the case as criminal is surprising. Today, the prosecutor has asked for a 5-year suspended sentence for Philippe Delpal and for 4 to 6 years for the other defendants with their sentences also to be suspended.

We continue to believe in a positive outcome of this case in court. The verdict is expected in the next few weeks. We sincerely hope that Philippe Delpal and the other defendants will regain their full freedom as soon as possible, including their freedom of movement. Such an outcome will contribute to an important improvement of the business climate.

***CCI France Russie** is today the main network of French companies in Russia. The Chamber has more than 400 member companies. The mission of the Franco-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is to strengthen economic and commercial relations between France and Russia, to promote cross-investment, to encourage constructive dialogue and to contribute to a better understanding of French and Russian realities.*

***The French Foreign Trade Advisors (CCE):** 4,500 businesspeople and international experts who have been serving France's development for over 120 years. Present in all regions of France and in more than 150 countries including Russia. The French Foreign Trade Advisors put their experience to work for the development of France on a voluntary basis. On a daily basis, they carry out concrete actions in partnership with public and private actors involved in promoting and supporting the internationalization of French companies.*

***The Association of European Businesses (AEB)** is the main representative body of foreign investors in Russia. Founded in 1995, the AEB is an independent non-profit organization of over 500 European and Russian companies. The AEB members are multinational corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises. They all share a commitment to boosting cooperation between the EU and Russia, as well as the desire to improve the investment climate of the Russian Federation.*