

Winston & Strawn Paris Secures Victory on Behalf of General Prosecution Office of Ukraine

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In a case that received widespread media attention around the world, Winston & Strawn's Paris office recently secured another victory on behalf of the General Prosecution Office of Ukraine in the extradition matter of a Kazakh oligarch, Mukhtar Ablyazov.

Ablyazov, a former Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan and chairman of the BTA Bank, is wanted in several countries for allegedly embezzling several billions of dollars. After Ablyazov was apprehended in his villa in the South of France more than a year ago, the French Court of Appeal granted extradition to Ukraine and Russia in order to face trial there.

Ablyazov's lawyers challenged this decision before the French Supreme Court, trying to prevent him from being extradited from France to face trial. The Supreme Court vacated the decision on procedural grounds, sending the case to another court of appeal. Creating new jurisprudence, the French Supreme Court held that Winston's client, a state requesting extradition as third-party intervenor, had no access to the case file and could not file written submissions, but was still entitled to argue at the French extradition hearing. Despite these limited procedural rights and other obstacles, Winston pulled off another victory at the Lyon Court of Appeal, which again granted extradition to Ukraine and Russia.

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