



Belenkaya to see her daughter again shortly - Russian Consul-General

30.05.2009, 19.10

PARIS, May 30 (Itar-Tass) -- Irina Belenkaya of Russia will see her daughter again shortly, Russian Consul-General in Marseilles Yuri Gribkov told Itar-Tass on Saturday.

"Irina and [her former husband] Jean-Michel [Andre], who initiated the first meeting between the mother and her daughter after their separation agreed to meet in the same format within days and again without the press," the diplomat said.

Belenkaya was allowed to see her daughter on Friday after the authorities of Aix en Provence, southern France, had set her free. She remains under judicial control while the conflict with her ex-husband is being settled and can move around France and even travel to Russia.

Gribkov said the first meeting on Friday in L'Estaque near Marseilles was held in a good atmosphere. "The parties came to an agreement on the meeting quite quickly. Both Irina and Jean-Michel were pleased, Gribkov said, adding that Elisa was the happiest of all.

"The meeting became possible due to the readiness of the parties, including of Jean-Michel Andre, to compromise. As a result, there appeared sprouts of mutual trust between the spouses, even though still very fragile," the consul general said.

He believes this is "very important ahead of the next court hearing to be held on June 12".

When divorcing, the spouses were unable to agree on parental rights in respect of their daughter Elise. They alternately took the girl to France and Russia. In late March, Belenkaya attempted to collect Elisa, 3, from her former husband by force. Jean-Michel Andre reported the incident to police, and the mother and her daughter were detained in Hungary.

On May 19, the Budapest court ruled that Irina Belenkaya had to be extradited to French authorities within ten days.

Mediators from Russia and France were enlisted to settle the conflict between the former spouses.

Belenkaya earlier stated her readiness to conclude an amicable agreement.

The signing of an amicable agreement by Irina Belenkaya will facilitate further resolution of her case in court, lawyer Irina Sidorova said earlier.

"I am confident that both Russian and French courts are closely watching the situation between the two parties because it is obvious that, in my opinion, this is a personal and family rather than a criminal case," she said.

Sidorova is the president of the "Franco-Russian Attorneys and Lawyers" Association.

"It is quite possible that if the parties will settle the case amicably, the prosecutor will certainly take this into account, even though the parties cannot stop the criminal proceedings, and will suspend them," Sidorova said.

"I think the judges in France and Russia will mostly likely take into account the amicable settlement of the conflict and will try to ensure that the child can move from one country to the other freely. They may help cancel the pervious court rulings regarding the child's parents who cannot travel to France and Russia respectively," she said.

"I have the impression that the parties have agreed that they should withdraw as many of their statements of claim as possible and not seek legal remedy again. This is the most reasonable solution of all," Sidorova said.

"To my mind, the positions of Irina Belenkaya and [her husband] Jean-Michel Andre become closer. The parties have apparently understood that they should lay down their arms, meet each other with their visors raised, shake each other's hands and make concessions. There can be no amicable agreement without reciprocal concessions," Sidorova said.