

Greek court rules to extradite cybercrime suspect to France

13 July 2018, by Costas Kantouris



In this Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2017 file photo, police officers escort Alexander Vinnik, center, as they leave a courthouse at the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki. A Greek court has ruled Friday, July 13, 2018 to extradite Russian cybercrime suspect Alexander Vinnik, a former bitcoin operator, to France, months after court decisions also ruled he can be extradited to the United States and Russia. (AP Photo/Giannis Papanikos, File)

A Greek court agreed Friday to extradite to France a Russian cybercrime suspect who also is wanted on criminal charges in the United States and Russia.

The court in the northern city of Thessaloniki ruled in favor of France's request for Alexander Vinnik, a former bitcoin operator who was arrested in Greece last year on a U.S.-issued international warrant.

Vinnik is appealing the decision, defense lawyer Ilias Spyriiadis said.

France is seeking the 38-year-old for alleged cybercrime, [money laundering](#), membership in a criminal organization and extortion. The Greek Supreme Court earlier approved Vinnik's extradition to the U.S. to stand trial for allegedly

laundering billions of dollars using bitcoin.

French authorities accuse Vinnik of defrauding thousands of people worldwide, including about 100 French nationals, by launching cyberattacks through his [bitcoin](#) platform. They allege he used 20,643 bitcoins to launder around 133 million euros (\$155 million.)

Vinnik has denied doing anything illegal. He remains jailed in Greece pending final decisions on his extradition.

Meanwhile, Russian authorities sent a new request this month for Vinnik's extradition. Russia initially sought Vinnik on lesser fraud charges, and a Greek court ruled for his [extradition](#) to Russia based on the first request. The second request raises the amount of money allegedly involved in the cyberfraud there to 750 million rubles (\$12 million.)

Spyriiadis said a European warrant ordinarily would take precedence over others, giving France first dibs on prosecuting Vinnik. But he said in practice, it'll be up to Greece's justice minister to decide where Vinnik ends up.

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