



# Guernsey Border Agency

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM TUESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013**

5<sup>th</sup> March 2013

### **4 YEARS FOR CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT MONEY LAUNDERING AND FRAUD OFFENCES**

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 Martins APSKALNS, a 27 year old Latvian male, appeared before the Royal Court of Guernsey where he was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment for conspiracy to commit money laundering and 4 years concurrent for fourteen counts of fraud by making a false representation.

APSKALNS was a primary suspect of a money laundering investigation which centred on a Latvian syndicate involved with criminal activity both in Guernsey and elsewhere. The criminal activity included the fraudulent use of compromised credit cards, cards from which data had been stolen, and used this data to purchase numerous airline flights and mobile phone 'top up' for third parties and subsequently, the laundering of the resultant proceeds of crime via the use of Guernsey based bank accounts.

The investigation established that APSKALNS used two criminal websites which facilitated the sale of compromised card data. APSKALNS would obtain the stolen card data from one of these websites, he or one of his associates would then use the stolen data to book a flight or obtain a mobile phone top-up and subsequently a cash payment would change hands. APSKALNS then introduced the criminal proceeds into the banking system by depositing cash himself and also by using other Guernsey based Latvian associates.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010 and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012, APSKALNS was responsible for laundering a total of £210,460.00 all alleged as being the proceeds of his criminal conduct.

In interview APSKALNS accepted that he was responsible for the total of £210,460.00 in cash being credited into Guernsey based bank accounts and their subsequent transfer to Latvian bank accounts either held in his name or under his control. He claimed that he passed 80% of the criminal proceeds to another Latvian associate whilst keeping 20% as his personal gain from committing the criminal acts and laundering the resultant proceeds.

In sentencing Judge Finch said that the Court was aware that this was the first time that such a case had been heard in Guernsey and that such activity would not be tolerated. In arriving at its decision the Court had taken into account the degree of planning and determination of the criminal enterprise, the fact that APSKALNS had continued his criminal undertaking on leaving Guernsey, the protracted period of time over which the money laundering had continued and the large amount of money involved. Judge Finch noted APSKALNS' "blasé" attitude and commented that the Court felt that he was a reoffending risk. Judge Finch stated that APSKALNS had carefully and deliberately planned the enterprise, was a determined fraudster and should expect substantial punishment.

Adrian Hale, a Senior Investigation Officer with the Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) of the Guernsey Border Agency, said that the FIU is responsible for the combating of financial crime and terrorist financing, specifically money laundering, and the FIU is committed to aggressively targeting and taking profit away from criminals, both locally and internationally.

**ENDS**

For further information please contact Adrian Hale, Senior Investigation Officer, Financial Investigation Unit, Guernsey Border Agency on telephone number 01481 714081