

Smuggling conviction overturned

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — A British couple sentenced to prison for trying to smuggle a Romanian baby out of the country left for home Tuesday four months after their arrest.

"We're very happy to be going home and only sorry we can't take the baby," Adrian Mooney, 42, said at Otopeni International Airport.

Holding his legally adopted Romanian daughter, Grace, Mooney said he and his wife Bernadette just wanted to get home "and settle Grace down."

Mrs. Mooney said the couple could no longer hope to adopt Monica Baiaram because "we have a criminal record."

The Mooneys were arrested in July as they tried to smuggle the 5-month-old baby across the Romanian-Hungarian border. The child was placed in an orphanage and on Oct. 14, a court convicted the Mooneys of attempted illegal adoption and sentenced them to 28 months in prison.

The Mooneys say they paid \$6,000 in various fees and didn't know they were breaking the law. They said they put the baby in a cardboard box on the floor of their car to keep her from rolling off the back seat, not to hide her.

A Bucharest court overturned the prison sentences on Nov. 16, passed a suspended sentence and ordered the couple out of the country. A 10-day waiting period for the prosecution to appeal ended Monday.

A diplomatic wrangle between Romanian and British officials followed the Mooneys' conviction. President Ion Iliescu promised to pardon the couple on a visit to Britain earlier this month.



AP Photo

Christmas spirit all over the globe

A giant Russian Grandfather Frost towers over employees cleaning the floor of a fancy, new shopping mall in central Moscow, Thursday, November 24, 1994. In the past, Russians traditionally celebrated and gave gifts on New

Year's Day with holiday decorations appearing in shops only days before the New Year. With the collapse of Communism in Russia and a budding market economy, many shops are getting into the holiday spirit much earlier.

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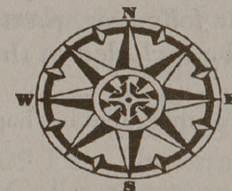
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