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Ban Lifted For Spain, Denmark

By The Moscow Times

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Russia has lifted a ban on vegetable imports from Spain and Denmark that was put in place amid an E. coli outbreak in Europe, the country's consumer rights watchdog said Friday.

Earlier last week, Russia lifted its blanket ban on vegetable imports from the European Union put in place over E. coli fears, starting with the Netherlands and Belgium.

Russia and the EU have reached agreement on safety certification for vegetables, and Federal Consumer Protection Service head Gennady Onishchenko said several other EU nations are on the waiting list to resume exports.

German authorities Friday reported another death in the European E. coli outbreak, bringing the total to 50. A total of 3,999 people have now been reported to be ill in Germany from the outbreak. Another 122 cases have been reported in 16 other countries.

Onishchenko said Friday that a blanket ban on the EU vegetable imports was a rational move for Russia.

"Even Germany with its high standards of health care had trouble coping with it," Onishchenko told reporters Friday, according to RIA-Novosti. "Just imagine what will happen if it's brought to our territory, given the condition of our health care facilities and [scarce] supply of antibiotics."

New infections have been declining for weeks, but the total tally is still rising largely because of delays in notification.

European health experts said Thursday that contaminated Egyptian fenugreek seeds were likely the source of the deadly outbreak.

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