

Uniqlo and Other Retailers Freeze Russian Expansion Plans

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Major foreign restaurant chains and retailers are putting plans to enter the Russian market on hold, while others, such as popular clothing brand Uniqlo, are slowing plans for expansion.

"In 2014 more than 20 well-known foreign brands could have appeared on the Russian market, but now their arrival is under question," said Yulia Sokolova, director of shopping center rentals at real estate consultancy Knight Frank, RBC reported.

Foreign chain activity has significantly slowed in the last three months due to concerns over the unfolding political crisis in Ukraine, Sokolova added.

Japanese clothing retailer Uniqlo has halted its expansion in Russia, said Maxim Karbasnikoff, head of retail real estate at Cushman & Wakefield, who is charged with selecting locations for the company.

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Restaurants under the U.S. franchise Schlotzsky's have not yet appeared as expected, nor have stores under the brand Blue Inc., a British clothing line.

Mekhmet Akpynar, who owns the rights to Schlotzsky's in Russia, said that the store openings are still planned but at a later date. "In a crisis, fast food generally remains popular," Akpynar said.

Others have confirmed their plans to come to Russia, including U.S. bar chain Hooters, Mexican family entertainment center KidZania and the Disney Store.

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