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# Ban on Russian Singers Makes 'New Wave' Festival Leave Latvia for Sochi

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The Russian organizers of the popular "New Wave" international music competition have decided to relocate, leaving behind its traditional venue in the Latvian resort town of Jurmala in favor of Sochi, according to an official statement issued by the Krasnodar region Monday.

The decision to swap venues was prompted by an earlier initiative by Latvian authorities banning Russian pop stars Valeriya, Iosif Kobzon and Oleg Gazmanov from entering the country in connection with their support of Russia's annexation of Crimea.

The pop singers had intended to visit Latvia for last year's "New Wave" festival, held in Jurmala in late July.

The contest has been organized annually since 2002 by Russian composer Igor Krutoy and Latvian composer Raimonds Pauls. Young singers between the ages of 16 and 30 are eligible to compete in the festival.

Latvian parliament member Andrei Klementiev told RIA Novosti on Monday that Jurmala may

lose some 17 million euros ($20 million) because of the decision.

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