

Cyprus Records Drop in Number of Russian Tourists

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Cypriot flag flutters as a man exercises at a dock on the beach of the southern coastal city of Limassol, Cyprus.

The number of tourists visiting Cyprus rose 1.5 percent in 2014, recovering after falling in 2013 but capped by a sharp drop in Russian visitors late in the year, official data showed Monday.

The Mediterranean island relies on Russia for more visitors than from any other country except Britain. But Russians were hit by a steep decline in the ruble and other economic problems late last year and their numbers fell 12.5 percent in December from a year earlier, the data showed, after dropping 25 percent in November.

Local tourism industry experts expect a 15 to 20 percent drop in Russian arrivals this year, potentially affecting Cyprus' ability to pull out of a recession that began in mid-2011.

Tourism accounts for about 11 percent of Cyprus's national output.

Cyprus welcomed 2.44 million visitors last year, the Cypriot department of statistics said. That was up from 2.40 million in 2013 when arrivals fell by 2.4 percent as the euro-zone member faced a banking crisis and was forced to seek an EU/IMF bailout.

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