

Swiss Expand Russia Blacklist to Stop Sanctions Evasion

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Swiss flag flutters in the sunshine in the country's second city of Geneva.

ZURICH — The Swiss government has added 19 people and nine organizations to a list intended to prevent the country from being used as a conduit to circumvent Western sanctions against Russia.

Switzerland decided last March not to join sanctions that the EU has imposed over the Ukraine crisis but has been keen to avoid undermining them. Although not a member of the European Union, Switzerland is linked by agreements governing trade and other measures.

The EU published a new blacklist for fresh sanctions in February.

"In view of the situation in Ukraine, and following decisions taken by the EU, the Federal Council today decided to extend its measures to prevent the circumvention of international sanctions," the State Secretariat for Economics (SECO) said in a statement on Friday.

Iosif Kobzon, a longtime member of parliament and sometimes considered Russia's answer to Frank Sinatra, is among the names added to the list. Others include Russian First Deputy Defense Minister Arkady Bakhin and Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov.

Those named on the list are prohibited from entering into new business relationships with financial intermediaries in Switzerland.

Switzerland, a global commodity trading and private banking hub, is a popular destination for Russia's wealthy elite and is reluctant to take steps it fears could compromise its cherished neutrality or damage closely nurtured trade ties with Moscow.

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