

Russian Tourism to Europe Down 30% as Economic Crisis Hits Travel

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Tourism from Russia to Europe fell by an average of 30 percent in the first quarter of this year compared with the same period in 2014, as a Russian economic slump, a weakened ruble and international tensions over the Ukraine crisis dented demand for European vacations, according to a report issued this week by the European Travel Commission (ETC).

“A vast majority of reporting destinations saw a notable decline ... attributable to the fragile geopolitical and economic situation,” said the report by the ETC, an association of the national tourism agencies of 33 states in and around Europe.

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The ruble lost one-third of its value to the euro last year as Western sanctions over the Ukraine crisis and low oil prices strangled Russia's economic growth. The Russian currency has since strengthened, but is still 20 percent weaker than at the start of 2014, raising the cost of travel in Europe for Russians.

The ETC did not say how many Russians traveled to Europe in the first quarter of this year or last, but many European countries play host to hundreds of thousands of Russian tourists each year.

According to Russia's Federal Tourism Agency, ETC member Turkey had more than 3 million Russian tourists in the first nine months of 2014, while Greece had over 1 million Russian tourists in the same period.

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