The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Exchange Students in Turkey Will Return Home

By Anna Dolgov

December 02, 2015



Russian student rights ombudsman Artyom Khromov told Interfax on Wednesday he would monitor the protection of Turkish students' rights in Russia, together with the Association of Foreign Students.

All Russian exchange students studying in Turkey will return home as soon as possible, the Education and Science Ministry announced on Tuesday, according to Russian media reports.

The ministry has also drafted a government order to revoke a 1992 agreement with Turkey on cooperation in science and technology, a ministry spokesperson said, the Interfax news agency reported.

Russia has fewer than 100 exchange students in Turkey, but all are to return home "on the tightest possible schedule," a spokesperson said Tuesday, Interfax reported.

Russian Education Minister Dmitry Livanov said Monday that the 1,030 Turkish citizens enrolled at 123 Russian educational institutions would be allowed to continue their studies,

Interfax news agency reported.

Livanov said the relevant institutions had been ordered to protect the Turkish students, adding that no incidents had been reported, Interfax said.

Russian student rights ombudsman Artyom Khromov told Interfax on Wednesday he would monitor the protection of Turkish students' rights in Russia, together with the Association of Foreign Students.

“In the case of illegal charges or the appearance of conflicts, measures will be taken promptly to solve the problems,” he was cited as saying.

Violations would be reported to Russia's Education Ministry, Khromov said, adding the ministry had been “willing to address problems.”

The developments followed an announcement earlier this week by a Russian-Turkish cultural center in Moscow that it was closing down.

Moscow's Library of Foreign Literature, where the center was located, followed up by its own statement Tuesday, saying its decision to shut down the center was “only partly political.” Other reasons included Turkey's failure to pay for the center's operations, the library said on its website.

The Turkish cultural center had been operating since 2013, and was initially funded by Turkey, the library said. But Turkey was cutting down its funding and stopped payments altogether this fall, contributing to the library's decision to end its agreement with the center — a deal that was to expire later this month, the library said.

“The library has decided that financing the Turkish center through its own means is not a priority and is not justifiable in the current political context,” the statement said.

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Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/12/02/russian-exchange-students-in-turkey-will-return-home-a51021