

Russia Withdraws From Eurovision Over Ukraine Ban

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Russia will not take part in this year's Eurovision song contest in Ukraine after its chosen contestant was barred from attending the competition.

Ukrainian officials [banned Russian singer Yulia Samoylova](#) from entering the country after it emerged she had toured the Russian-annexed Crimean peninsula in 2015.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the organization behind Eurovision, said that Russia had rejected its offer to [compete via satellite](#) or to send another artist in Samoylova's place.

"Unfortunately this means Russia will no longer be able to take part in this year's competition," the EBU said in a statement. "We very much wanted all 43 countries to be able to participate and did all we could to achieve this."

Russia's Channel One also announced that it would not broadcast the competition, which is

due to take place between May 9 and 13 in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev.

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Under Ukrainian law, anyone who enters Crimea directly from Russia is barred from entering Ukraine for three years.

Yet organizations including the EBC have condemned Kiev for using the law to exclude Samoylova from the competition.

It follows similar criticism of Ukraine's winning entry at the 2016 contest in Sweden, a song about Josef Stalin's mass deportation of Crimean Tatars during World War II.

Frank Dieter Freiling, Chairman of the Eurovision Song Contest Reference Group, condemned Ukraine's decision [in an online statement](#). "We believe [Ukraine's decision] thoroughly undermines the integrity and non-political nature of the Eurovision Song Contest and its mission to bring all nations together in friendly competition," he said.

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Samoylova, who was a finalist in Russia's televised talent show Faktor A in 2013, previously performed at the opening ceremony of the 2014 Sochi Winter Paralympics.

The singer has used a wheelchair since childhood due to spinal muscular atrophy: a neuromuscular disorder which causes the muscles wastage.

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