The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Expels Bulgarian Diplomat in Tit-for-Tat Move

By Reuters

December 05, 2019



Steve Fernie / Flickr (CC BY-NC 2.0)

The Russian government has expelled a Bulgarian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move after Sofia asked Moscow to recall a diplomat on suspicion of espionage, Bulgaria's foreign ministry said on Thursday.

Bulgaria's ambassador in Moscow, Atanas Krastin, has been informed that the diplomat must leave Russia within the next 24 hours in line with diplomatic protocol, the ministry said in a statement. Moscow cited the "principle of reciprocity", it said.

Sofia said in October it had requested the diplomat's recall after Bulgarian prosecutors said he had been involved in espionage. It also declined to grant a visa to Russia's incoming defence attache.

Bulgaria, a loyal ally of Moscow in communist times, is now a member of NATO and the

European Union but retains close cultural and historic ties to Russia, which remains its biggest energy supplier.

Sofia did not join its NATO and EU allies in expelling Russian diplomats last year over the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain.

Related article: Bulgaria Asks Russia to Recall Diplomat Over Spying Allegation

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/12/05/russia-expels-bulgarian-diplomat-in-tit-for-tat-move-a68489