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Russian Tourists Trapped in Europe Amid Canceled Flights, Closing Borders

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Several European countries have shut their borders. **Aleksandr Avylov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian tourists in Europe have found themselves trapped abroad as flights have been canceled and borders closed due to the coronavirus crisis, a spokeswoman for Russia's travel industry union told Interfax on Tuesday.

Russia suspended most flights to and from Europe to try to contain the spread of the coronavirus from Monday. At the same time, several European countries have shut their borders, preventing anyone from leaving or entering.

"Russian tourists in Europe are left to their own devices and are asked to return home, but this is not easy — most of the remaining flights either have no seats or their ticket prices have risen several times," spokeswoman Irina Tyurina said.

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Tyurina estimated that there are hundreds of Russian tourists currently stranded in Europe, adding that Russia's Federal Tourist Agency (Rostourism) hasn't released official numbers.

"They are already being kicked out of some hotels, because there is no one else there, only Russians," she told the Business FM news outlet. "There are even examples of [the hotels] feeding guests with dry rations because the kitchen has already been closed."

According to Tyurina, the situation is most acute in the Czech Republic, which was one of the first European countries to shut its border. Russian national carrier Aeroflot will suspend its flights to Prague on Thursday.

She advised Russian tourists to contact Russia's Turpomosch tourist assistance association and called on the Foreign Affairs Ministry to ramp up its efforts to help Russians trapped abroad, as it has the authority to solve problems at an interstate level.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Monday that thousands of Russians are currently stuck abroad due to the coronavirus, adding that Russia's embassies are working "around the clock" to bring them home.

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