

Exodus of Russian Researchers Grew Fivefold Since 2012

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Scientists are leaving Russia. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

The number of scientists and highly qualified specialists leaving Russia has risen fivefold in nearly a decade, Russia's Academy of Sciences (RAS) [said](#) Monday.

Nikolai Dolgushkin, the RAS presidium's chief scientific secretary, estimated that emigration among Russian researchers increased from 14,000 in 2012 to almost 70,000 last year. He contrasted the figures with China, the United States and other countries bolstering their ranks with tens of thousands of new researchers over the same period.

“Objectively speaking, Russia is the only developed country where the number of scientists has been decreasing for several decades in a row,” Dolgushkin said.

He noted that in 1990 Russia had 992,000 researchers, the world's highest number. By 2019, that figure had dwindled by two-thirds to 348,000 researchers.

“The continuing outflow of scientists and highly qualified specialists abroad plays no small

part in the decline in the number of researchers,” Dolgushkin said.

“It’s a sensitive and urgent issue that’s relevant today,” he said at a RAS meeting.

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The figures were disclosed in the same month that President Vladimir Putin signed a highly criticized law requiring Russian educators to obtain [state permission](#) for public outreach outside formal settings.

Russian scientists have also decried its requirements to obtain government permission to strike foreign partnership agreements as lawmakers sought to stamp out “anti-Russian” influence in academia.

Last month, the RAS’ Siberian branch classified its own report on pollution across the region “[not to stir up the public](#)” ahead of key parliamentary elections this fall.

Several Russian scientists and academics have in recent years been convicted or faced charges of treason and espionage for handing over sensitive materials to foreigners amid souring relations between Moscow and Western countries. Kremlin critics have accused the authorities of groundless paranoia.

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