The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Estonia Suspends e-Residency Scheme, Tourist Visas for Russians

March 09, 2022



Tallinn, Estonia. **Ville Hyvönen (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

Estonia suspended its e-residency scheme for Russians and Belarusians on Wednesday, saying it feared the system could be used to avoid sanctions.

The Baltic country said it would no longer process applications from citizens of the two countries for its flagship scheme that allows holders to open businesses and bank accounts as well as access Estonia's public services.

It will also suspend its issuance of tourist visas to Russian nationals until Moscow's invasion of Ukraine ends, Estonia's foreign minister announced Thursday.

"The reviewing of e-Residency applications from Belarusian or Russian citizens has been put on hold and no decision on granting e-Residency will be made until further notice," officials said in a statement, adding the decision was taken by the Estonian police force and border service.

Ex-Soviet Estonia is among the countries that have pushed for a hard line against both Russia and Belarus over the invasion of Ukraine.

Interior Minister Kristian Jaani said existing Russian holders of Estonian e-residency would be under “heightened scrutiny.”

E-residency does not give holders the right to live or travel to Estonia, but does allow them to open businesses and carry out financial transactions in the country.

Western sanctions have largely cut Russia’s banking system off from the rest of the world. Amid a significant devaluation in the value of the ruble, Moscow has also sealed its financial borders, banning the transfer of foreign currency abroad and forcing companies to sell nearly all their hard currency revenues.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/03/09/estonia-suspends-e-residency-scheme-for-russians-belarusians-a76842