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Russia Expands List of 'Unfriendly' Countries

July 22, 2022



Greek visa center in Moscow. **Moskva News Agency**

Russia has expanded its short list of so-called "unfriendly" nations, adding five European states that Moscow says have taken "hostile" actions.

The list of "unfriendly" countries, first established in May 2021 to include the United States and the Czech Republic, restricts the number of local staff that can be hired at designated nations' diplomatic missions in Russia.

Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia and Denmark are now on the list, according to the Russian government's updated list published Friday.

All five countries have expressed staunch support for Ukraine following Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of its western neighbor.

Greece is now limited to 34 local staff, Denmark to 20 and Slovakia to 16 at their respective embassies and consulates.

“Slovenia and Croatia will not be able to hire employees in their diplomatic missions and consular offices” altogether, the government decree states.

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This is the first expansion to Russia’s list of “unfriendly” countries in more than a year.

The Russian government warned that it may expand its list further “taking into account the ongoing hostile actions of foreign states against Russian missions abroad.”

A separate list of “unfriendly” countries imposes economic limits on 48 mostly Western countries in response to sanctions imposed on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine this year.

Moscow ordered countries on that list to make ruble payments on debt and obtain government approval for corporate deals in addition to placing visa restrictions on their citizens.

Russian President Vladimir Putin in May banned economic relations with sanctioned individuals from "unfriendly countries” in response to Western asset seizures abroad.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/07/22/russia-expands-list-of-unfriendly-countries-a78378