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Poland, Baltics Enact EU Visa Ban for Russians

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Frank Vincentz (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Four European Union member states bordering Russia temporarily barred most Russian travelers Monday in the latest EU show of support for Ukraine.

Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will now block Russian citizens with EU visas from visiting for tourism, culture, sport and business purposes.

Holders of residence permits, family members, humanitarian cases and dissidents are exempt from the ban.

EU countries that share a land border with Russia have become a transit hub for Russians seeking to travel further into Europe after the EU banned Russian flights in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The four countries went further than an EU-wide decision last month to suspend a visa facilitation deal with Moscow, making it longer and more expensive for Russians seeking to

enter the bloc's 27 member states.

Moscow said at the time that it would not respond to the move.

Finland, which also shares a land border with Russia, slashed the number of visas issued to Russian citizens to 10% on Sept. 1 but has not joined the Baltic and Polish ban.

The EU says it recorded more than 1 million entries, including multiple visits on the same visa, of Russian nationals in the first half of 2022.

As the Polish and Baltic bans went into force this morning, Russia's Embassy in Latvia decried what it called "outrageous" demands by Latvian border guards to sign a statement condemning the Kremlin.

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