

Putin Abolishes Russia's Federal Tourism Agency

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Excursion buses in Moscow. **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday signed a decree abolishing Rostourism, Russia's federal tourism agency, and handing its remit to the Economic Development Ministry.

The Economic Ministry said in a statement that the decision to dissolve Rostourism and to give its responsibilities to the ministry would help Russia meet its tourism objectives more effectively.

Rostourism had overseen the provision of state services related to tourism across Russia since it was established in 2004, overseeing big-ticket events such as the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

The decision to abolish the agency comes at a time of turmoil for Russia's tourism industry, with strict Western sanctions imposed on Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine and the suspension of flights from most European countries.

Over the past three years, the number of foreign tourists arriving in Russia has continued to decrease, according to Dmitry Gorin, the vice president of the Russian Union of Travel Industry, Izvestia reported in August.

“Over the past three years, due to pandemic restrictions, the absence of electronic visas, and now the impossibility of making payments using foreign bank cards and the absence of direct flights, the overall percentage of the drop in tourist flow to the Russian Federation averaged 95-97%,” Gorin said.

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