The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Travel to Russia Picks Up in 2023 as EU Citizens Make Reluctant Return

May 03, 2023



Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia saw an uptick in inbound travel including from Europe and China so far this year, the RBC news website reported Wednesday, citing Federal Security Service (FSB) border crossing data.

The FSB recorded a 17% increase in January-March 2023 visits to Russia compared with the same time last year, up from 2.78 million to 3.27 million.

EU citizens made 11.8% more visits at 113,900, an increase from 101,900 in the first quarter of 2022.

Latvians, Lithuanians, Fins, Estonians and Polish citizens were among the EU citizens to travel to Russia the most, while other European nationals cut down on visiting Russia.

European countries have tightened visa procedures for Russian nationals over the past year and have increased rejections of applications since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Direct flights between Russia and Europe are also virtually nonexistent due to mutual airspace bans between Moscow and the EU imposed after the invasion.

Trips from China increased by 460%, though the 84,200 visits are still below the pre-pandemic figures of 113,800 in January-March 2020.

Ex-Soviet Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan contributed the highest number of visits with year-on-year increases hovering between 50%-80%.

Visits from Ukraine, which Russian forces invaded early last year, plummeted from 769,000 to 55,500.

In 2022, overall visits to Russia which include tourism, work, study and business totaled 13.1 million.

The FSB's figures account for the overall number of border crossings, meaning they include multiple trips into Russia by the same foreign citizens.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/03/travel-to-russia-picks-up-in-2023-as-eu-citizens-make-reluctant-return-a81018