

Moscow Slams 'Racist' EU Ban on Russians' Private Cars

September 11, 2023



Peter Kovalev/TASS

Moscow's Foreign Ministry has slammed a European Union ban on Russian citizens from bringing their personal vehicles and other belongings across EU borders as a "racist" move.

In a Sept. 8 [explanatory note](#) to its rules on sanctions against Russia over the invasion of Ukraine, the European Commission said that the regulation "prohibits the purchase, import, or transfer, directly or indirectly, of goods...if they originate in Russia or are exported from Russia."

These goods appear to range from cars, smartphones and laptops to everyday necessities like toothpaste and toilet paper.

"This is not a policy of sanctions, this is not a question of creating some additional benefits for the sinking economy of the European Union. This is racism as it is," the state-run TASS news agency [quoted](#) Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying Monday.

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev [suggested](#) that Moscow should “temporarily suspend diplomatic relations with the EU,” adding that, in his opinion, the EU “told all Russians” that “you are second-class citizens for us.”

Last week, the RBC news website [reported](#) that the list of banned items includes personal belongings such as smartphones, jewelry and laptops.

Asked about the implementation of the rules, a European Commission spokesperson said that clothes worn by people crossing a border were unlikely to be seen as an attempt to bypass sanctions.

"That is a different situation to an expensive car," the spokesperson said, as [reported](#) by Reuters.

In a [comment](#) to The Bell news website on Monday, European Commission spokesman Daniel Sheridan Ferrie said that “EU member states are required to comply with European sanctions” and added that clothes would not be sanctioned like cars and “other valuable goods.”

Earlier this summer, German customs [said](#) that it could confiscate private cars in which Russians have entered the country. At least 10 vehicles were confiscated in Germany, Deutsche Welle [reported](#) in July.

Some Russian lawyers argued that confiscating one's personal belongings is unlawful.

“The fact that a Russian citizen is on the territory of another state, assuming he traveled there not on forged documents but on a legal basis, does not constitute a crime," [said](#) Vladimir Starinsky, chairman of the Starinsky & Partners bar association.

Some also said the restrictions could harm Russian opposition activists and figures who had to leave Russia due to an intensified crackdown on dissent since the start of the war against Ukraine.

“Is this policy aimed at further restricting Russian citizens from visiting the EU countries including those who flee from the [Russian President Vladimir] Putin regime and threat of war?” Boris Bondarev, a former member of Russia's delegation to the United Nations in Geneva who resigned in protest of the war, [said](#) on X (formerly Twitter).

The Bell contributed reporting.

Original url:

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