

Sberbank Workaround Lets Customers Send Money to Europe – The Bell

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Yuri Smityuk / TASS

Russia's largest lender Sberbank appears to have found a workaround to Western sanctions and SWIFT bans by enabling wire transfers to European banks through third-party intermediaries, the independent news outlet The Bell [reported](#) Friday.

Sberbank and other major Russian banks were cut off from the SWIFT financial messaging system after Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, severely limiting their ability to process international payments.

According to The Bell, which tested the workaround itself and spoke to others who have also successfully transferred money, Sberbank customers can send rubles via its mobile app to European cardholders at Revolut or N26.

The money is routed through a non-sanctioned intermediary, converted into cryptocurrency and transferred to a second intermediary who deposits euros into the recipient's Revolut or N26 account.

Recipients reportedly see a sender name unrelated to Sberbank — often a payment processor, a city in Central Asia or an individual.

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The workaround appears to function only with Sberbank. Similar transfers attempted via other sanctioned banks, such as Gazprombank and T-Bank, were blocked, The Bell said.

A Sberbank customer service representative told The Bell that up to 500,000 rubles (about \$6,400) can be sent per transaction, with a monthly limit of 3 million rubles (\$38,200). “It’s not dangerous. The bank has always had transfers like that,” the employee was quoted as saying.

Revolut and N26 denied involvement in the transfer scheme and said they block transactions that violate sanctions. N26 said it performs regular compliance checks, while Revolut warned users that such transfers may be blocked or result in frozen accounts.

Legal experts told The Bell that the method does not technically breach sanctions due to the use of intermediaries. Sberbank’s press service declined to comment.

Russian journalist Nikita Mogutin was the first to [report](#) the workaround on June 13, identifying a Polish intermediary.

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