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Russia's Parallel Imports of Western Goods Fall Nearly 50% in 2025

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Valery Sharifulin / TASS

Russia's parallel imports of Western goods fell sharply in 2025 as tighter government controls and border disruptions narrowed a key supply channel created after Western companies exited the market, officials and analysts said.

Western products such as Apple smartphones continued flowing into Russia after the invasion of Ukraine via the government's sanctions-busting parallel imports scheme in which goods are re-exported to Russia without permission from the trademark owner.

Imports brought in without the consent of trademark holders dropped by nearly half last year, Industry and Trade Minister Anton Alikhanov told the state-run TASS news agency.

Russia imported goods worth $20.9 billion through parallel-import schemes between January and November, down 45% from $37.9 billion a year earlier, Alikhanov said. Monthly volumes have fallen to about $2 billion from roughly $4 billion when the system was first launched.

“The initial forecast of $25 billion for 2025 no longer looks relevant,” Alikhanov said, citing customs data showing a sustained decline.

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The fall follows a series of policy changes, including the removal of cosmetics and perfumes from “unfriendly” countries from the parallel-import list.

Authorities have also signaled plans to exclude clothing and electronics, arguing they can be replaced by domestic or “friendly” suppliers.

Imports were further disrupted late in the year after President Vladimir Putin ordered tighter oversight of goods routed through Kazakhstan.

Customs officials were granted broader powers to seize shipments lacking full documentation, causing lengthy delays at the border.

Up to 10% of Russia’s imports were stuck at the Kazakh border by November, according to importers and logistics firms, hitting supplies for some retailers, particularly online marketplaces.

Overall imports fell 2.4% in 2025, analysts at the Gaidar Institute said, adding that investment-related goods remain below pre-war levels.

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