The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Restricts Armenian Flower Imports Amid Strained Relations

May 21, 2026

Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

Russia's agricultural watchdog announced Wednesday a temporary restriction on all flower imports originating from or transiting through Armenia, a move that comes amid fraying relations between the two countries.

Rosselkhoznadzor claimed the ban, which takes effect on Thursday, is aimed at protecting domestic plant safety and domestic producers. Out of 96.2 million flowers imported from Armenia, inspectors flagged 135 cases requiring "quarantine" measures, the agency said without providing further details.

The restrictions will remain in place until inspections of Armenian greenhouse facilities can be carried out.

Armenia supplies around 10% of Russia's cut tulips, and Armenian roses retail for up to 60% less than competing imports from Ecuador, according to the Kommersant business newspaper.

Rosselkhoznadzor's announcement follows weeks of diplomatic friction ahead of parliamentary elections in Armenia next month. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party faces off on June 7 against an array of opposition parties dominated by pro-Russia groups.

Related article: Russia Wants Armenia Back in the Fold. It May Be Too Late.

While Russia and Armenia are formally allies, relations have deteriorated since neighboring Azerbaijan regained control of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. Armenia accused Russia and its peacekeeping forces of failing to deter Baku's military offensive.

During recent bilateral talks with President Vladimir Putin, Pashinyan took a subtle swipe at Russia's tightening authoritarian controls by pointing out that Armenia maintains "100% free social media" — contrasting his country's open internet with heavy wartime censorship in Russia.

Authorities in Moscow have since banned the operations of a factory that imports Armenian cognac and blocked the sale of 1.1 million bottles of Armenian mineral water.

Putin recently warned that it would be "impossible by definition" for Armenia to remain a member of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union if it were to join the European Union. Last year, Armenian lawmakers adopted a law to initiate the EU accession process.

This month, Russia's Foreign Ministry also scolded Armenia for hosting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for a European summit.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/05/21/russia-restricts-armenian-flower-imports-amid-strained-relations-a92808