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Cyprus Stops Accepting Visa Applications at Centers in Russia, Shifts Operations to Consulates

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aboodi vesakaran / unsplash

Cyprus will suspend visa processing at its third-party centers across Russia and temporarily route all applications directly through its consulates, the country's embassy in Moscow announced Thursday.

The Embassy of Cyprus said its contract with an external visa processing service provider had expired. Beginning Monday, visa applications will be handled directly by its consular section in Moscow, as well as consulates in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Krasnodar.

Under the temporary system, applicants must submit their original documents and copies in person at least 15 days before their intended travel date.

In a statement posted to its website, the embassy said Russian offices of private visa operator BLS International will stop accepting applications starting Saturday. Russian citizens who

submitted applications through BLS International prior to Thursday will still be able to collect their passports from those centers.

“A new agreement with an external service provider is expected to be signed in the near future,” the embassy said, though it did not provide further details.

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Cyprus is a member of the European Union, which suspended its visa facilitation agreement with Russia in 2022 and moved to deny Russian citizens multi-entry visas last November. Those collective restrictions have dramatically curbed travel, slashing the number of EU visas issued to Russians from several million annually to hundreds of thousands.

Earlier this month, a group of European countries urged the EU to implement “new restrictive and binding visa measures” for Russian nationals looking to vacation within the Schengen area.

Russian opposition figure Yulia Navalnaya spoke out against such measures in September, warning that broad bans would be a “serious mistake” by reinforcing the Kremlin’s narrative that Europe is inherently hostile to all Russians.

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