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Slovakia Suspends Short-Stay Visas for Russian Tourists Through Summer

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Slovakia has suspended short-stay Schengen visa applications for Russian nationals through the end of the summer, though processing for long-stay visas will remain open.

Private visa operators BLS International and VFS Global both said Slovakia's visa application centers will cancel all existing appointments scheduled for July and August. The companies said applicants who have already paid booking fees will receive full refunds.

"During July and August 2026, Slovakia's visa application centers will exclusively accept Schengen visa applications under the 'Sports' travel category, alongside national visas for all eligible long-stay purposes," said VFS Global.

For the remaining long-stay national visas — typically issued to students, employees and family members of Slovakian citizens — processing times have been extended and could take more than 30 days, BLS International warned.

The Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR) said Slovakia's suspension of summertime visa processing is unlikely to cause major problems given that the country is not a popular travel destination among Russian tourists.

ATOR said Slovakia issued just 1,149 visas to Russians last year.

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Slovakia 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.

Last month, a group of European countries urged the EU to adopt "new restrictive and binding visa measures" for Russian nationals looking to vacation within the Schengen area.

Russian opposition figure Yulia Navalnaya spoke out against the proposal 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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