The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Will Close Germany's Goethe-Institut Cultural Centers, Lavrov Says

September 03, 2026

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. **Dmitry Belitsky / Moskva News Agency**

Russia will close Germany's Goethe-Institut cultural centers, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Thursday, after German officials ordered the closure of the Russian cultural center in Berlin as retaliation for a drone incident at the Leipzig/Halle Airport that they blamed on Moscow.

Germany also ordered the closure of the Russian consulate in Bonn in response to what it said was an attempted attack at the airport. This week, President Vladimir Putin accused Germany of planting evidence in order to blame Moscow for the incident.

Lavrov said Russia would close the Goethe-Institut centers in the cities of Moscow, St Petersburg and Yekaterinburg as retaliation for the closure of the Russian cultural center in Berlin.

"Of course, they will be closed after our cultural center was kicked out," Lavrov said on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

The centers had stayed open "despite all the Ukrainian complications in our relations with the West," he added.

Russia's first Goethe-Institut opened in Moscow in 1992, soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Reuters contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/09/03/russia-will-close-germanys-goethe-institut-cultural-centers-lavrov-says-a93625