

Russia Orders Closures of German Consulate and Cultural Centers in Tit-for-Tat Move

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The German Consulate General in St. Petersburg. **GAlexandrova (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Russia's Foreign Ministry [said](#) Monday it was shuttering the German consulate in St. Petersburg and German cultural centers across the country.

The closures were announced in retaliation for Germany's [decision](#) last week to close the Russian consulate in Bonn and a Russian cultural center in Berlin after its government blamed Moscow for an attempted drone attack at Leipzig/Halle Airport last month.

Moscow gave diplomats and employees at the German Consulate General in St. Petersburg until Sept. 18 to cease operations and leave Russia.

Staff at Germany's Goethe-Institut cultural center branches in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg were given until this Sunday.

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The Russian Foreign Ministry said it summoned Germany's ambassador in Moscow to inform him about the retaliatory decisions.

"It was the German authorities who once again provoked a new spiral of escalation in bilateral relations. Full responsibility for the consequences lies entirely with the German government," the Russian ministry said in a statement.

President Vladimir Putin [accused](#) Germany of planting evidence in order to blame Moscow for the early August incident at Leipzig/Halle Airport.

On Sunday, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [claimed](#) Berlin's accusations against Moscow amounted to "an effective declaration of war against us."

Lavrov [said](#) last week that Moscow would respond to the closure of its cultural center in Berlin by closing the Goethe-Institut cultural centers across Russia.

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

Reuters contributed reporting.

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