

Russia Announces Visas for Citizens of Montenegro in Reciprocal Move

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Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. **Moskva News Agency**

Russia will introduce visa requirements for citizens of Montenegro in retaliation to Podgorica's decision to end its bilateral visa-free travel agreement with Moscow as it seeks to join the EU in 2028.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova [confirmed](#) that Montenegro's foreign ministry notified Moscow of its intent to cancel the 2008 mutual travel agreement on Sept. 28.

"In practice, this means that starting Nov. 1, our citizens will only be able to enter and remain in Montenegro with visas. Accordingly, citizens of Montenegro will also have to obtain visas for trips to Russia," Zakharova said.

Montenegro [announced](#) in July that it would end visa-free access for citizens of Russia, Belarus, China, Saudi Arabia and Turkey to align with EU standards.

Zakharova argued the decision would curb Russian tourism, harm local businesses and degrade Montenegro's investment climate.

Montenegro has for years remained one of the few European countries to offer visa-free entry to Russians for up to 30 days and absorbed a large wave of anti-war Russian emigres after the invasion of Ukraine.

Local media [reported](#) earlier this year that two-thirds of registered Russian residents had left Montenegro in anticipation of the new visa rules.

Related article: [Montenegro Expels Founder of Russian Pro-War Blog Rybar for 'Security Reasons'](#)

"It's pointless for Montenegro to expect Brussels to compensate them for their inevitable losses," Zakharova said.

She warned that EU accession would require prospective members among the Balkan nations to adopt a "confrontational anti-Russian course" that would go against their national interests.

The subject of tightening border controls recently drew the attention of the founder of the popular pro-war Telegram channel Rybar, who was detained and deported from Montenegro on claims that he was seeking to film a documentary portraying EU integration as an externally imposed process.

Russian-Montenegrin relations have been strained since 2016, when Podgorica accused Russia of plotting a failed coup with Serbian ultranationalists. The Kremlin denied that claim.

Ties worsened further after Montenegro joined NATO in 2017 and aligned with EU sanctions over Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Montenegro has also banned Russian state media and expelled Russian diplomats for espionage, prompting Moscow to add the country to its list of "unfriendly" states.

Reuters contributed reporting.

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