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Russia Summons Romanian Ambassador Over Youth Athletes Visa Denial

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The Romanian ambassador to Russia Cristian Istrate. **moscova.mae.ro**

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Friday it has summoned Romania's ambassador in Moscow to protest Bucharest's refusal to grant visas to a Russian youth taekwondo team ahead of an upcoming European championship.

Romanian Ambassador Cristian Istrate was warned that "hostile attacks against Russia will not go unanswered and will carry long-term negative implications." The Russian ministry did not detail how it would respond.

"Moscow views the infringement on the rights of child athletes as a shameful manifestation of discrimination on the basis of nationality," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said the Russian national team had been scheduled to compete in the European Cadet Taekwondo Championships for athletes aged 12 to 14 in Bucharest on Nov. 26-28.

World Taekwondo approved the full return of Russian and Belarusian junior and senior athletes in January, months before the International Olympic Committee provisionally lifted its ban on the countries' Olympic committees in July.

But a growing number of European countries have moved to block Russian athletes from entering their territory despite international sports federations easing restrictions imposed after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

On Thursday, Russia summoned Finland's charge d'affaires in Moscow to protest new entry restrictions that forced seven Russian figure skaters out of this week's Grand Prix event and barred Russian skiers from this month's World Cup opener.

President Vladimir Putin also condemned Finland's ban on Thursday.

Earlier this week, Norway banned entry for Russian and Belarusian athletes, including those competing as neutrals, while the Czech Republic said it would bar Russian players from January's women's Under-18 ice hockey world championship.

Sweden, Poland and Canada have also moved to restrict Russian competitors from upcoming events.

Reuters contributed reporting.

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