

# NUMBER OF RUSSIAN TOURISTS IN EUROPE DROPPED BY 90% IN 2022



The flow of Russian tourists to Europe in 2022 decreased by 80-90% due to logistical difficulties and travel costs are currently three to four times higher.

The Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR) stated that in the Baltic States, Poland, the Czech Republic and Finland, **after the introduction of restrictions on the entry of Russians, the tourist flow from Russia fell to zero.**

The embassy of Greece, which last year entered the top 10 tourist destinations for Russian tourists, reported that in the first ten months of the year, 31.3 thousand Russian citizens visited Greece, which is 80% less than a year earlier.

## Drop above 90%

The year 2022 was a record one in terms of reducing the flow of tourists from the Russian Federation to Europe: the direction lost from 80% to 90% of tourists over the year, said RTS Vice President Dmitry Gorin.

“First of all, the complex transport logistics, the lack of direct flights with Europe, the need to fly transit flights with transfers affect, flights are often very expensive. And if earlier a ticket to Europe cost €300-400 on average, now it costs €1,000 or more. The flight time has increased from three hours to 8-24 hours,” the representative of the RTS specified.

ATOR Vice-President Artur Muradyan clarified that if we focus on the statistics of visa centers in countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain - traditionally the most popular among Russians destinations in Europe - then the drop in applications was 80%. In other countries, this figure is even higher.

This difference is due to the fact that these three countries - one of the few in the EU - continue to issue visas. Although less than half go there for the purpose of tourism, for the rest it is a window to Europe. These three countries are just in the category where the number of Russian tourists has decreased the least. And if we take ten states that now do not let Russians in at all, the tourist flow there, respectively, is zero. In general, the drop in tourist flow to Europe can be estimated at 90-95%, - said the representative of the tourism industry.

Among the ten countries that have stopped issuing tourist visas to Russians are Belgium, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Finland, the Czech Republic and Estonia.

According to Artur Muradyan, there are countries that are not in the Schengen agreement, such as Bulgaria, and Cyprus, where the flow of Russians continues, but for the most part they go there not for tourism purposes.

In 2021, according to FSB statistics, the top 10 travel destinations for Russian citizens included only three EU countries: Cyprus (over 560,000), Greece (235,200) and Croatia (135,000).

The Greek Embassy in the Russian Federation reported from January to September 2022, 31.3 thousand Russians visited the southern European country. Thus, the flow of tourists to the republic decreased by more than 80% over the year.

“Regarding the planned flow of Russian tourists: the consulates of the Hellenic Republic operating on the territory of the Russian Federation continue to issue visas to Russian citizens who comply with the necessary requirements,” the diplomatic mission noted. The recovery of the tourist flow from the Russian Federation is due, among other things, to the resumption of direct flights, which were limited after the imposition of EU sanctions.

In March, 27 EU countries, as well as Great Britain, Canada, the United States and Japan closed their airspace for Russian airlines. Russia has introduced a similar ban.

## **Northern Leader**

According to the Russian border statistics service, in just the first three quarters of 2022, Russians made 17.4 million trips abroad, which is 13.8% higher than a year earlier. Of these, only 4.7 million were for the purpose of tourism. At the same time, no EU country was included in the top ten most popular tourist destinations among Russian tourists. In the third, a most touristic summer-autumn quarter (from July to September), the number of trips by Russian citizens abroad amounted to 9.7 million, which is almost twice as much compared to the second quarter of 2022 (then the number of trips was 5 million).

In the three quarters of 2022, Finland became the leader in the number of trips of Russians among European countries — in January-September, citizens of the Russian Federation made almost 731.2 thousand trips to this country. This is almost three times higher than a year earlier.

This trend is largely due to the fact that **from July 15, the Russian government lifted the ban on traveling abroad through land borders**, as well as the fact that from July 22, Finland lifted coronavirus restrictions on the entry of tourists and simplified the issuance of visas. But already at the end of September, the Scandinavian country, following the Baltic republics, introduced a ban on the entry of Russians on tourist visas.

In addition to Finland, among the top five destinations were Abkhazia, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Georgia. These five countries accounted for almost 70% of all departures.

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