

# The entry of the Russian Federation citizens into the Republic of Latvia to be restricted

Published: 09.09.2022.

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On 8 September 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision imposing restrictions on the entry of the citizens of the Russian Federation into the Republic of Latvia by crossing the external border of the European Union. Free travel of citizens of an aggressor state, especially for the purposes of tourism, while the armed forces of that state have invaded Ukraine, is not only immoral but also posing risks to public order and security at the level of both political provocations and aggression in the public space.

The decision provides for restrictions on the entry of citizens of the Russian Federation, holders of Schengen short-stay visas, for non-essential purposes, for instance, tourism and leisure.

The new regulation envisages a number of exceptions, including not refusing entry to politically persecuted persons or in other humanitarian situations.

The following categories of persons will be permitted to enter:

the holders of residence permits of a member state of the European Union or the European Economic Area, or of the Swiss Confederation, or long-stay visas of a Schengen Agreement member state;

family members (spouses, grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, and dependent persons) of the nationals of the Republic of Latvia;

family members of the nationals of the European Union, the European Economic Area, or the Swiss Confederation;

employees, crew members of freight and passenger transport service providers, crews of freight or technical voyages arriving in or departing from the Republic Latvia while performing their job duties;

seafarers and members of the merchant marine on their way to or returning from their workplace aboard ship;

persons whose entry is related to humanitarian considerations;

the staff of the diplomatic and consular missions of the Russian Federation accredited in or sent to the Republic of Latvia, and their family members, diplomatic couriers or *ad hoc* diplomatic couriers of the Russian Federation, persons travelling to the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Latvia on a short-term business trip for the provision of technical support, staff of the diplomatic missions and consular posts of the Russian Federation crossing the territory of the Republic of Latvia in transit for the performance of their official functions and their family members, as well as persons crossing the territory of the Republic of Latvia in transit while on a short-term business trip to the Embassy of the Russian Federation for the provision of technical support in the receiving country.

holders of a Facilitated Transit Document (FTD) or a Facilitated Rail Transit Document (FRTD) who are travelling from the Russian Federation to the Kaliningrad Oblast in the Russian Federation and back.

At an informal meeting of in Prague on 30-31 August, EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs decided to suspend the EU-Russia Visa Facilitation Agreement, as well as seeking EU-level solutions to restrict the issuing of tourist visas to Russian citizens. At the same time, a common understanding was achieved among the EU Foreign Ministers that countries bordering on Russia could impose national-level restrictions on entry into the EU.

Therefore, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania have agreed on an immediate regional solution so that, a collective EU action pending, traveller flows from Russia could be effectively restricted at this point in time already, thereby reducing security risks. The decision has been adopted in a concerted manner, in cooperation between Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, and it takes effect simultaneously in the three Baltic States on 19 September 2022.

<https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/entry-russian-federation-citizens-republic-latvia-be-restricted>