

## **Stop Issuing Tourist Visas for Russian Nationals**

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Bucharest (Romania), 30/09/2022

### **Recognizing that:**

1. Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has been going on since 2014. On 24 February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine that has continued for 7 months.
2. The support for the war continues to be strong in Russia as three out of four Russians support what the Kremlin calls its “special military operation”.
3. Since the start of the war, the EU has heavily sanctioned trade with Russia as well as put heavy sanctions on the Russian elite and decision-makers.
4. Since the end of corona-related travel restrictions, Russian individuals have been able to apply for tourist visas and travel to many European countries to enjoy themselves.
5. On February 24, 2022, martial law was introduced in Ukraine. For the period of martial law, the Decree of the President of Ukraine of 24.02.2022 № 64/2022 "On the imposition of martial law in Ukraine" prohibits male Ukrainian citizens aged 18 to 60 from traveling abroad.

### **Acknowledging that:**

1. The Western community should do everything in our hands to defend democracy, freedom and human rights.
2. Regardless of heavy sanctions, the support among the Russian citizens towards the war is still high.
3. Travel to European countries for leisure purposes and shopping creates a leakage in the otherwise tight sanctions.
4. Even though not all Russian individuals are in charge of the war, it is against common sense of justice that Russian individuals can travel in Europe while the regime they support is killing Ukrainians and destroying the homes of millions of Ukrainian citizens.<sup>1</sup>
5. Some Russian nationals might still have acceptable reasons to travel from Russia, such as humanitarian, diplomatic, or family reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://time.com/6208238/why-russian-support-for-the-war-in-ukraine-hasnt-wavered/>



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6. The EU has already made a political decision (31 August) to suspend the 2007 visa agreement made with Russia as well as to intensify scrutiny over the future applications submitted by Russian tourists. However, this only means that the visa application processes are hindered, made more expensive, burdensome and drawn-out for Russian nationals - not banned.<sup>2</sup>

**YEPP calls on:**

1. The European Commission and the European Parliament to immediately decide on stopping the issuance of Schengen tourist visas to Russian nationals.
2. The member states to implement the strongest possible tools they can to limit Russian tourism in the EU.
3. The member states to share objective information on Russia's aggressive war in Ukraine to all Russian nationals who travel to the EU with other visas.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/08/31/eu-foreign-ministers-agree-to-scrap-russia-visa-deal-but-stop-short-of-full-tourist-ban>