

# Polish Restaurateur Refuses to Serve Russians Who Support Putin

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The restaurant owner hung a blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flag and put up a sign that read: "Not Serving Russians."

A Polish restaurant owner who refused to serve Russian customers in protest at their country's perceived interference in Ukraine has amended his policy: He is now refusing service only to those Russians who support the policies of President Vladimir Putin.

In the wake of reports claiming that Russian troops had joined in the fighting in Ukraine, Jan Hermanowicz, the owner of a restaurant in the Polish city of Sopot, hung a blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flag over his restaurant's entrance and put up a sign that read: "Not Serving Russians," Polish and Russian media reported.

In response, the Russian Foreign Ministry posted a photo of the sign on its Facebook page, saying Friday that it was "against retaliatory signs [that have appeared] at gas stations in the Kaliningrad region" — a Russian enclave on the Baltic Sea.

"The problems with European integration should be solved in a different way," the ministry added in its post, which comes amid Moscow's bans on Western food imports in retaliation for sanctions against Russia.

Sopot Mayor Jacek Karnowski said Saturday that the sign had been removed and expressed hope that the incident would not discourage Russian tourists from visiting Poland, TASS news agency reported over the weekend.

Other Russian media welcomed the news: "Polish authorities force restaurateur to serve Russians," a headline on the Pravda.ru website said.

But it seems that Hermanowicz had simply decided to be more specific in his restrictions.

"[We are] not serving Putin's Russians," read new signs in Polish and Ukrainian at his restaurant, Kaliningrad-based NewsBalt reported Sunday.

Hermanowicz has also appealed to his fellow restaurant owners and other businesspeople in Poland to adopt a similar stance, the report added.

"Not only restaurant owners, but all businesspeople who trade with Russians have a duty to do the same," he was quoted as saying.

Poland, which was formerly occupied by the Russian Empire and then controlled by Moscow during the Soviet era, has been among the harshest European critics of Russia's policies on Ukraine.

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