

# Sberbank to Close Half of Branches Over 5 Years

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Russia's largest bank plans to close up to half of its branches over the next five years, [the company's CEO has announced](#).

Sberbank chief German Gref said that closures would only affect branches in major towns and cities.

"We've suspended the closure of rural branches, and we will only close those branches which are not in high demand in major cities," Gref said in an interview with the Rossia 24 television channel.

Gref said that it was too early to discuss completely scrapping walk-in branches in favor of online services. He also said that there were no plans to reduce the bank's ATM network.

"More and more banks will likely close as time goes on," he said. "But even the next five to seven years is too soon to see whether consumer habits will completely change, particularly for people over 40."

Gref has [previously claimed](#) that artificial intelligence could make 80 percent of all decisions at the bank by 2021.

“About 50 percent of the decisions that were made by people five years ago are made today by computers. We believe that in five years or so, 80 percent of all decisions will be made using artificial intelligence,” he said during a speech in July.

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