

# Putin Orders Unilateral Visa-Free Travel

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Russian President Vladimir Putin has [ordered](#) to allow visa-free travel from countries regardless of their visa policies toward Russian citizens.

A Kremlin decree dated Oct. 30 instructs Putin's cabinet to facilitate visa-free tourism, business, educational, sports and cultural travel even if these countries require visas for Russians to visit.

Ukraine, for example, introduced [visa requirements](#) for Russian nationals as Kyiv cut diplomatic ties with Moscow and shut its borders with Russia in response to the Kremlin's Feb. 24 invasion.

Putin set a June 2023 deadline for his prime minister, foreign and interior ministers, as well as the head of the Federal Security Service (FSB), to report on his proposals.

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Additionally, the president ordered the officials to increase flights, extend tourist visas and renew Russia's e-visa program for citizens of so-called "friendly" countries.

The order comes as Russia has been plunged into isolation over its widely condemned invasion of Ukraine.

Reciprocal airspace bans between Russia and the EU imposed over the invasion have severely limited travel, while Russia's EU neighbors Finland, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have banned most Russians from crossing their borders.

Russia has since 2021 maintained and expanded a list of "unfriendly" countries, which includes the United States, the United Kingdom, EU members and their Western allies, in response to economic sanctions.

The clause on visa-free travel in the Kremlin's decree does not contain mentions of "friendly" or "unfriendly" countries.

In a closely watched anti-Western speech last week, Putin hailed African, Latin American and certain Asian countries as "friends of Russia."

Russia's Foreign Ministry told state media Wednesday that it would prepare proposals on e-visas by the end of 2022.

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