



By: TA | AP Brief

Russia to close German cultural centers



Russia will shutter German cultural centers across the country, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Thursday.

The move comes after Berlin blamed Moscow for an attempted **attack at Leipzig/Halle Airport** and announced the closure of both the Russian Consulate in Bonn and the Russian House cultural center in the German capital.

Lavrov said that cultural centers belonging to Germany's Goethe-Institut would be closed in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg, adding that any other response would show a lack of "self-respect" on Russia's part.

Speaking at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Lavrov said that Germany "could not have failed to understand" that the closure of Russian House would "signify the end of their cultural presence in Russia."

A drone laden with explosives was found near a Ukrainian plane at Leipzig/Halle Airport on Aug. 4 and later defused.

The airport is a major international freight hub used for providing **support to Ukraine**.

Moscow has been widely accused by Western officials of running a campaign of sabotage and disruption with the aim of undermining support for Ukraine and destabilizing European nations.

Putin has dismissed the allegations, saying Berlin wants to distract from its own failings and dissatisfaction among voters. Any proof being offered "has been planted," Putin said.

EU looks to respond after attempted attack

European Union ministers on Wednesday weighed how best to respond to the attempted drone attack but struggled to find new ways to meet the challenge without resorting to military means.

"It is clear that it has all the hallmarks of state-

sponsored terrorism. The question is: what do we do about this," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas told reporters before chairing a meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers in Ireland.

They discussed sanctions, visa restrictions and shutting Russian consulates, among other measures.

The EU has slapped almost two dozen **packages of sanctions** on Russia over the war in Ukraine, hitting more than 3,000 officials, oligarchs and entities including banks, energy companies and drone makers.

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The EU was already preparing to impose more travel bans and asset freezes on another 1,600 people, Kallas said.

Germany insisted it was "not at war" but had become a "daily target" of the Kremlin's hybrid campaign.

Putin dismissed the allegations, saying Berlin wants to distract from its own failings and dissatisfaction among voters. Any proof being offered "has been planted," Putin said.

But German Foreign Minister Johan Wadepuhl said Berlin had carefully prepared its response "and now Russia must live with these consequences."

He called on Russia "to show that it is also ready for reasonable talks and negotiations, particularly regarding the situation in Ukraine."