



Budapest: ten expelled, and Moscow loses its easiest EU posting

An ordinary number of expulsions, from the one EU capital that had never made any.

INCIDENT DETAILS • 5WH

Who Ten members of the Russian mission in Budapest, none named. Announced by Anita Orban, given as foreign minister by most outlets and as deputy prime minister by one.

What A declaration that the ten were engaged in activities unacceptable for diplomats under the Vienna Convention. No specifics. Relations are not broken off.

Where The Russian embassy in Budapest. No Hungarian sites or operations identified.

When Announced Tuesday 8 September 2026. No departure deadline reported.

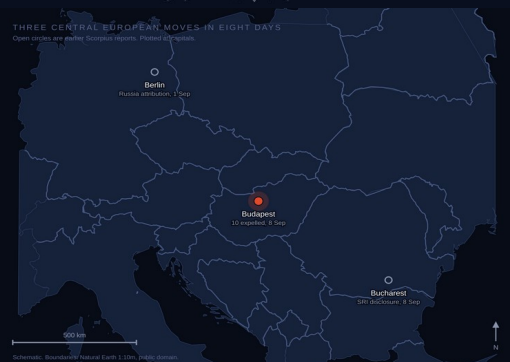
Why Officially nothing beyond the Vienna formula. Likely it concerns intelligence work under diplomatic cover - a reading of a phrase, not a disclosed finding.

How Persona non grata declaration. Zakharova promised a response that would be harsh and painful, which means reciprocal expulsions.

IMPACT

- Ten cover posts removed from a capital that made no expulsions after the 2022 invasion.
- Every EU state has now expelled Russian diplomats. The softest square on the board has gone.
- Hungarian representation in Moscow will very likely be cut in return, costing Budapest reporting reach.
- No physical effect. This is a counter-intelligence action, not an attack.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS



1 Sep Berlin attributes Leipzig

8 Sep Bucharest: SRI disclosure

- 1 Apr 2026 - Orban loses after 16 years
- 2 Magyar government hardens on Russia
- 3 8 Sep - ten ordered out under Vienna
- 4 No names, no sites, no case published
- 5 Moscow promises harsh and painful reply
- 6 Kyiv calls the move timely and sensible

ASSESSMENT, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The country is the story, not the number. Hungary sat out the post-2022 expulsions; that exception has now ended.
- The Vienna formula is the whole of the public evidence. Briefing this as a proven espionage case goes further than Hungary has.
- Host-state tolerance is a political setting. It changed with an election, not with a new discovery.
- Unlikely this reduces collection for long. Cover is rebuilt, and the work moves to people without accreditation.