

12,000 Move Back to Russia

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A record 12,000 former Soviet citizens moved to Russia last year through a state program for the resettlement of compatriots, the Federal Migration Service said Monday, adding that the figure marks a 30 percent uptick from 2009.

About 31,000 people have moved to Russia since the program's start in 2007. Initial forecasts said some 300,000 would resettle annually.

The program now focuses on quality, not quantity, senior migration service official Mikhail Tyurkin said Monday, adding that many skilled specialists, scientists and businesspeople have moved to Russia through the program. He did not elaborate or identify the countries they came from.

The program, intended to improve the country's dismal demographics, especially in the sparsely populated eastern regions, aims to bring in former Soviet citizens now living outside Russia.

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