

Medvedev to Get 'Serious' About U.S. Visas

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President Dmitry Medvedev promised on Monday to "seriously discuss" the easing of the visa regime between Russia and the United States during an upcoming meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama, RIA-Novosti reported.

The public call for visa-free travel originates from Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who raised it during talks with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden in March.

Medvedev said in Irkutsk on Monday that he recently wrote to Obama on the matter and would take up the issue with him at a Group of 8 meeting in the French town of Deauville in May.

He did not elaborate on the proposal, saying only that it concerns "an easing of the visa regime." Kremlin foreign policy chief Sergei Prikhodko said days after Biden's visit that the letter to Obama backed a cancellation of visas.

The proposal was met with a lukewarm reception from Biden. Obama's Russia adviser,

Michael McFaul, said earlier this month that the visa regime was unlikely to be canceled but might be softened.

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