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Limited Visa-Free Travel Sought

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A group of State Duma deputies have appealed to the European Parliament, asking them to scrap visa rules for some Russians who fly into European Union member states, Kommersant reported Tuesday.

Under the initiative, Schengen visas would be dropped for Russians who arrive in Europe on regular flights and have a return ticket, the report said.

The deputies raised the idea with a group of the European Parliament's lawmakers during a brief visit to Moscow last week. The European lawmakers have not commented on the proposal publicly.

The eased visa rules would be a compromise because "the European Union is not ready for such radical steps" as visa-free travel, Duma Deputy Andrei Klimov said in a statement published on United Russia's web site.

Klimov earlier this year suggested abandoning Schengen visas for Russians born after 1989, but the idea was not endorsed by other deputies.

The Kremlin has been lobbying for visa-free travel with the EU since 2002. In July, Moscow and Brussels agreed on a step-by-step plan toward visa-free travel.

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