

3-Day Visa-Free Travel Proposed for Major Cultural Events

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A program of three-day visa-free travel could function during festivals at the Mariinsky Theater, above.

A bill will be introduced in the fall authorizing visa-free travel to Russia for a period of three days for tourists attending major cultural events, Deputy Prime Minister Olga Golodets announced Friday.

“We want to introduce a program to increase the flow of tourists. This includes domestic tourism as well as visa-free programs related to cultural events in Russia,” Golodets told journalists, Interfax reported.

She said the program could function during opera or ballet festivals at the Mariinsky and Bolshoi theaters and at large museums.

Golodets said the bill is currently being prepared by the Culture Ministry and would be passed to parliament in October.

Russia has relaxed its visa laws for special events in the past, including the 2008 Champions League football final held at Luzhniki stadium between Manchester United and Chelsea. The roughly 25,000 tickets held by English fans for the match doubled as 72-hour tourist visas for the event.

In 2010, then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin promised to drop visa requirements for footballers and fans as part of Russia's bid to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup, which was awarded to Russia in December of that year.

A visa waiver for attendees of the championship would be the largest ever granted by authorities.

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