

Depardieu Mulls Fleeing to Russia to Avoid Tax

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Celebrated actor Gerard Depardieu is considering moving to Russia and renouncing his French citizenship in protest of his home country's new "wealth tax" on high earners.

"Putin already sent me a passport!" Depardieu said in comments carried by French newspaper Le Monde on Tuesday.

The same day, President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told RIA-Novosti that Depardieu's comments were likely in jest. "By all appearances, it was just a joke," he said.

Depardieu, who has performed in more than 180 movies and television shows, announced last week that he was planning to move to Belgium to avoid a steep hike in income tax. French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault called the actor's notion "pathetic."

Depardieu responded in an open letter to Le Journal du Dimanche in which he declared that he

would surrender his French passport and turn in his social security card, which he claimed to have never used.

As France continues to combat the lingering effects of the global financial crisis, President Francois Hollande's socialist government has announced plans to levy a "wealth tax" of 75 percent on incomes above 1 million euros (\$1.3 million) next year, the BBC Russian service reported.

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