Foreign Ministry Proposes Fingerprinting Russian Visa Applicants

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Foreign Ministry has proposed scanning the fingerprints of people applying for Russian entry visas from July 1, 2014, in the interests of "national security."

Under the pilot project, applicants will have all of their fingerprint patterns scanned at Russian consulates in Britain, Denmark, Myanmar, and Namibia, and at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport, according to the draft presidential decree, posted Wednesday on the unified government legislation portal.

The ministry must notify the countries whose citizens would be affected by the pilot project by June 15, 2014.

The draft decree did not say how long the pilot project would last or when other countries would be made subject to it.

A note accompanying the decree said that the measure will improve the ability of Russia's security services to clamp down on illegal migration and prevent terrorist suspects from entering the country.

The authorities have stepped up their attempts to thwart terrorists in the wake of two bombings in the southern city of Volgograd in December that resulted in the deaths of at least 34 people.

The accompanying note also described the draft legislation as a "timely response" to the European Union's plans to next year start taking the fingerprints of Russians applying for visas to its member states.

The bloc has repeatedly put off plans for a visa–free regime with Russia, citing the country's poor human rights record as a reason to delay the deal, which has been ongoing for more than ten years.

Russia's Federation Council last month approved a law making it mandatory for all Russians applying for an international passport to provide fingerprints starting Jan. 1, 2015. The information will be stored in a chip embedded in travelers' passports.