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Parliament Considers Simplifying Tourist Visa Requirements

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The parliament is due to consider a draft law lengthening the validity of tourist visas and easing the requirements for obtaining them, a government website said Friday.

The government initiated bill proposes to reduce the complexity of the application process for tourist visas and extend their period of validity from 30 days to six months.

The measure is aimed at simplifying the entry procedures for foreigners who come to Russia for a variety of reasons, including cultural and scientific exchange.

"This will make it possible to significantly ease the visa requirements for citizens of those countries that are ready to introduce similar procedures ... for Russian citizens," the statement says.

Almost 15 million Russian tourists traveled abroad last year, a 20 percent increase over the year before, according to the Federal Tourism Agency. Russia saw a 10 percent increase in foreign tourist arrivals last year, which are expected to reach 23 million annually by 2017.

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