

Agency Proposes Taking DNA Samples From Foreigners

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A Federal Migration Service officer checking travel documents a Moscow's Vnukovo Airport.

The Federal Migration Service has proposed taking DNA samples from foreign workers coming to Russia, Konstantin Romodanovsky, head of the service, said Tuesday at a meeting of the Federation Council.

He also said that the agency had received more than 3 million sets of fingerprints from foreign workers in 2013 and 700,000 since the beginning of this year, RIA Novosti reported.

Mandatory fingerprints for immigrant workers were introduced in January 2013, and the migration service recently announced plans to expand the program to workers' family members aged 12 or older. Russian citizens' passports for foreign travel with fingerprint data were also tested by the FMS in major cities during 2013 and will be issued on a mass scale for those looking to cross their countries' borders.

Romodanovsky said that last year about 17.7 million foreigners visited Russia, with about three quarters coming from Commonwealth of Independent States countries and 13 percent

coming from the European Union.

The number of foreigners visiting Russia has climbed 40 percent in the last four years, he said.

The DNA sample proposal comes amid other restrictions largely aimed at immigrant workers from Central Asia, such as a recently passed law requiring residency applicants to prove their knowledge of Russian history, Russian language and the fundamentals of Russian law, though exceptions will be made for highly qualified specialists, their families and students.

Romodanovsky said Tuesday that 10.9 million foreign citizens are currently in Russia, including tourists and students.

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