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Russia to Offer One-Hour Passport Service to Crimea Residents

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Russia will offer an express passport-processing service in Crimea.

Russia will offer an express passport-processing service in Crimea on Monday to provide inhabitants with the document within an hour of applying, the government said, as Moscow seeks to promote its citizenship on the peninsula it annexed in spring.

The Federal Migration Service said in an online statement that it would hold a "demonstration" of the express service at its offices in the Black Sea port of Sevastopol. Any Crimea resident wishing to obtain a Russian passport who shows up by 11 a.m. on Monday will be given the document within an hour of filling out the forms, state-run Vesti.ru website reported.

After Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula, it proclaimed all inhabitants to be its citizens and gave those who wished to decline Russian passports a mid-April deadline to submit a written refusal, migration service chief Konstantin Romodanovsky was quoted as saying by Vesti.ru.

About 3,000 people submitted statements by the deadline, Romodanovsky said in the report, adding that residents who refused a Russian passport could end up facing prosecution on administrative charges.

By late July, about 1.5 million Crimea residents had received Russian passports, state news outlet RIA Novosti quoted Deputy Prime Minister Olga Golodets as saying. The report added that the total number of passport-eligible adults living on the peninsula is about 2 million.

Romodanovsky has said that if the Sevastopol "pilot" project is a success, a similar express service may be offered throughout Russia, RIA Novosti reported, apparently referring to the issuance of passports to Ukrainians who have moved across the border to escape the violence in the east of their country.

See also:

Russia Expects Millions of Crimeans to Apply for Russian Passports

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