

Kyrgyz Nationals Will Need International Passports to Enter Russia from 2015

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Kyrgyzstan nationals will no longer be able to enter Russia using their domestic passports.

Citizens of Kyrgyzstan will no longer be able to enter Russia using their domestic identification documents after the end of this year, the government of the Central Asian nation has said.

Foreign travel passports will be required for entry starting on Jan. 1, according to government orders cited by Kyrgyzstan's Vecherny Bishkek and RFE/RL's Radio Azzatyq.

The change, which is likely to affect many thousands of labor migrants who move to Russia in search of better earnings, is part of Moscow's plan to tighten travel regulations on its borders with former Soviet states.

Kyrgyzstan, like Russia, issues two kinds of passports — domestic ones and those required for most trips across the border.

Russia's Cabinet has said President Vladimir Putin has ordered the introduction of passport

requirements for nationals of all former Soviet republics except fellow members of the Moscow-led Customs Union by next year.

The union comprises Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan has also announced plans to join in 2015, it said it would need until 2020 to complete the process.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed orders this summer that would introduce the passport requirement for citizens of Tajikistan, another former Soviet state in Central Asia.

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