

70,000 Russians Fined for Failure to Report Foreign Passports, Documents

March 18, 2015



In June, President Vladimir Putin approved legislation requiring Russian nationals who hold dual citizenship or foreign residency permits to register with the country's migration authorities.

Since Russia's enactment last year of a strict new dual-citizenship law, some 70,000 Russian nationals have been fined for failure to declare their foreign passports and residency permits, the TASS news agency reported Wednesday, citing the head of Russia's Federal Migration Service (FMS).

In June, President Vladimir Putin approved legislation requiring Russian nationals who hold dual citizenship or foreign residency permits to register with the country's migration authorities. The law required affected citizens to declare their foreign passports and residency documents by October.

Failure to declare one's legal ties to a foreign state can result in a fine of up to 200,000 rubles (\$3,200), or up to 400 hours of community service. Konstantin Romodanovsky, the head of the FMS, told TASS that the 70,000 individuals who had faced administrative charges for violating the law were fined, though he did not specify the amounts.

"This is a new rule that not everyone understands," TASS quoted Romodanovsky as saying. "We are not only confronted with Russians nationals who have received citizenship elsewhere, but also foreign citizens who have adopted Russian citizenship."

Romodanovsky added that some 900,000 Russian nationals had informed the FMS of their citizenship and residency ties to foreign states. Russian citizens who declared their dual citizenship most often held American, British or Israeli passports, according to Romodanovsky.

Russia does not explicitly forbid dual citizenship but has been known to restrict dual nationals' rights, including barring them from working in the civil service.

For residents of the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed by Russia last March, the new citizenship law will not enter into force until Jan. 1, 2016.

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