Russian Regions Empowered to Ban Most Foreign Workers

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian regions have been granted the right to temporarily ban foreign workers who are from ex-Soviet countries and other states whose citizens do not require visas to travel to Russia.

The measure, published on the government's website Thursday, comes amid a deep recession and is intended to "facilitate efficient regulation of the labor market" in the regions and help "prioritize Russians' jobs."

It allows regional governments to close whole sectors of the local economy to foreign workers for up to a year.

It concerns only people who require patents to work in Russia under a system for states that enjoy visa-free travel to the country. This includes countries such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which have millions of citizens working in Russia.

Despite a downturn that began last year, unemployment in Russia has remained relatively

low, at around 5.5 percent. However, this is partly thanks to employers cutting hours and wages, rather than firing people, and average incomes have fallen sharply.

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