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40% Drop in Muscovites Applying for International Passports in 2015

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The numbers of Muscovites applying for international passports decreased by 40 percent in the first 11 months of 2015 compared to the same period of 2014, the Izvestia newspaper reported Tuesday, citing the Federal Migration Service (FMS).

From January to November last year, the FMS registered about 569,000 applications from Muscovites, which is a drop of 40.3 percent compared to the 954,000 applications in January-November in 2014.

The number of passports issued has declined because the validity period of international passports was extended to 10 years in 2010, Moscow's FMS deputy head Vladimir Ivanov told Izvestia, adding that the moribund state of outbound tourism and the economic crisis have also affected demand.

The majority of Muscovites prefer to apply for the new type of international passport with longer validity, which is the main reason for the sharp decline in the number of applications, according to Ivanov.

"We've been issuing the new type of the international passport for many years already," said Ivanov. "When the passport was valid for only five years, citizens had to come and apply again after that period, but now it's not necessary. Moreover, domestic tourism has grown, and those who wanted to go to Egypt now go to Baikal," he added.

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