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Russia Finalizes 'Revolutionary' Dual Citizenship Bill – Kommersant

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New legislation would allow foreigners wishing to become Russian citizens to keep their existing citizenships. **Mikhail Tereshchenko / TASS**

Russian lawmakers expect to vote on legislation that would allow dual Russian citizenship for foreigners as soon as this month, the Kommersant business daily reported Friday.

Under current Russian law, foreigners wishing to become Russian citizens must first renounce their other citizenships. Authors of the bill expect the new amendments relaxing these rules to help attract between 5 million and 10 million new Russian citizens, primarily from Russian-speaking populations in post-Soviet states.

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The "revolutionary" dual citizenship bill "will definitely be introduced in the State Duma in February," lawmaker Leonid Kalashnikov told Kommersant.

The Russian government's press service said it was finalizing the draft law and will submit it after approval by the Kremlin.

"We want to close this issue at the [Duma's] spring session so that all those who wish to can become Russian citizens," Deputy Speaker Pyotr Tolstoy told Kommersant.

The legislation will require three votes in the State Duma and one in the upper-house Federation Council before it gets sent to President Vladimir Putin for signing.

Foreign citizens could also be exempt from the five-year continuous residence requirement in order to become a naturalized Russian citizen, Kalashnikov added.

Putin's migration policy guidelines for 2019-2025 state that there should be clear and simple conditions for acquiring Russian citizenship. In July, he expanded the list of people eligible for fast-tracked passports to include residents of separatist-controlled eastern Ukraine.

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