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Russia Passes Dual Citizenship Law, Hoping to Add 10M Citizens

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The amendments to Russia's citizenship law strike down a requirement to renounce existing citizenship.
Andrei Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

Russian lawmakers from both houses of parliament have passed legislation Friday allowing dual Russian citizenship for foreigners, sending it to President Vladimir Putin's desk less than two weeks after introducing it.

Lawmakers have described the amendments to Russia's citizenship law, which among other steps strike down a requirement to renounce one's existing citizenship, as "revolutionary." Their authors expect up to 10 million people, primarily from Russian-speaking populations in the former Soviet republics, to obtain Russian passports as the country tries to fix its demographic crisis.

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The bill relaxing current citizenship rules passed the lower-house State Duma unanimously in

a 302-0 vote in a rare session Friday. The Duma usually convenes between Tuesday and Thursday.

Russia's upper-house Federation Council, which traditionally gathers once a week on a Wednesday, passed the bill shortly after.

Both votes took place within 10 days since the Russian government submitted the legislation for consideration.

Russia's dual citizenship bill will become law 90 days after Putin signs it and Russia's official gazette publishes it.

The bill also exempts spouses and children of Russian nationals from the five-year continuous residence requirement in order to become a naturalized Russian.

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

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