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Russia Re-Opens to Foreigners with Work Visas

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Russia announced new easing of border restrictions for foreigners with work permits. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

Foreign nationals may now enter Russia for work purposes as long as their employer obtains permission ahead of time, according to a decree published by the Russian government Friday.

The decree, which went into effect on Feb. 16, follows a nearly yearlong suspension on most foreign arrivals to Russia prompted by the coronavirus pandemic. Previously, Russia had only allowed entry to foreigners holding "highly-qualified specialist" visas and their family members, as well as citizens of countries that made reciprocal flight agreements with Russia and foreign students arriving from those countries.

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Under the latest decree, any foreigner with a Russian work permit or a teacher's permit wishing to enter the country can ask their employer to file a request with the relevant

ministry, said Timur Beslangurov, a lawyer from the Moscow-based Vista Immigration agency.

“Every company in its charter has a code for its activity that falls under the authority of a certain ministry — for example, if you work in wholesale, your employer would apply through the Industry and Trade Ministry,” Beslangurov told The Moscow Times.

If the ministry approves the employer’s request, the foreigner’s documents are automatically forwarded to the federal border service and they are added to the “approved entry” list, he said.

All individuals arriving to Russia are required to present English or Russian-language proof that they have tested negative for the coronavirus less than 72 hours before arriving.

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