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Russia Urges Citizens to Renew Passports as EU's Digital Entry System Deadline Looms

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Mikhail Pochuev / TASS

The Russian government is advising its citizens to obtain new biometric passports as a growing number of countries within the European Union adopt the bloc's digital entry system for non-EU citizens ahead of an implementation deadline set for this spring.

Europe's visa-free Schengen area began rolling out its Entry/Exit System (EES) in October, replacing manual passport stamping with biometric data for better security and tracking overstays.

In total, 29 Schengen area countries have already stopped or will no longer recognize five-year non-biometric passports by the April 10 implementation deadline.

"Holders of these passports must obtain new biometric (10-year) general foreign passports in advance," Russia's Embassy in Warsaw said in a statement published on Wednesday.

The embassy said that Poland will adopt ESS on April 1, after which entry into the European Union using old Russian passports will no longer be possible.

Other countries, like Germany, France, Denmark and the Czech Republic, have already adopted ESS.

Before 2022, the year President Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian nationals accounted for a large portion of Schengen visa recipients.

According to travel experts, demand for Schengen visas remains high among Russians despite an increasing number of restrictions introduced by the EU in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

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