

# RUSSIA LAUNCHES NEW HOTEL CLASSIFICATION



Today in Russia there are about 31 thousand hotels and 41 small accommodation facilities and all of these are now under a new regulation - mandatory hotel classification.

A couple of days ago, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed a provision on the mandatory classification of Russian hotels. Hotels with more than 50 rooms must be evaluated with a star before the beginning of July this year. Those with 15 to 50 rooms must be assessed by the beginning of 2020.

**Hotels have been classified in Russia for a long time before, from the beginning of the century.** However, the procedure was voluntary. The hotelier himself decided whether to assign the stars to a hotel or not. Only the hotel owners in Sochi were obliged to classify their hotels before and during the 2014 Olympics and in the 11 cities which hosted the football World Cup last year.

The service will be paid and its price will depend on the amount of the rooms and the estimated star. Thus, a hotelier considering his hotel to be up to the standards to be considered a five-star facility will pay more than the one who evaluates his accommodation facility at lower standards.

The hotel classification should be reevaluated every three years. The average price of the expert evaluation will be 30-60 thousand rubles. If the owner inflates the number of stars, he will be fined. A fine will also have to be paid by all those who do not classify their hotels on time.

In the classification, everything will be taken into account: the area of the rooms, the condition of the furniture, mattresses, bed linen and towels and the quality of food.

The provision clearly spelled out a set of services for the various categories. For example, five-star hotels' staff is obliged to change bed linen and towels daily, provide laundry and ironing services for the guest, deliver the luggage from the car to the room. Rooms must also be equipped with soundproof doors.

The Ministry of Economic Development of Russia refused the idea of assigning "keys" to hostels as it was common practice before. According to representatives, if the object does not pull on any of the hotel stars according to its characteristics, it simply remains without a category.

**Both hostels and the so-called boutique hotels, which in terms of the quality of services correspond to seven stars, can be left without a category,** a federal official explained. The Ministry does not exclude the possibility of creating special categories for niche projects in the future but this will require a more detailed study and discussion with the businesses.

As a result of the new hotel classification, tourists will be able to receive reliable and current information about the selected accommodation. They will know exactly what set of services they are paying for and will not be surprised on the spot. Strict requirements will oblige hoteliers to comply with the standards that they previously regulated at will, often saving on the quality of services

provided.

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