

RUSSIA TO SIMPLIFY THE TOURIST VISA POLICIES



Russia plans to boost its tourism sector by facilitating the formalities including the tourist visa policies. E-visa is also to be introduced in several regions.

A few weeks ago, at the Business Russia Forum, president Putin made clear his desire to facilitate the visa formalities, including the introduction of e-visa throughout the country by 2021.

Currently, the ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Internal Affairs, and the Federal Tourism Agency (Rostourism) are **to prepare proposals for the simplification of the current visa regime (including the electronic visas) for foreign visitors coming to Russia for tourist purposes.**

Pilot cities for the e-visa project

Sergei Galkin, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, attending the Interregional Forum on the Development of Cruise Tourism on the Volga and the Caspian Sea, announced recently that some cities and regions could participate in the pilot project for the electronic visas.

The Deputy Minister said that “Moscow and St Petersburg can be the pilot regions in terms of simplifying tourist visa formalities because they naturally generate a high level of tourist traffic. They are well organized and can, therefore, better carry out the tasks related to digitization and administration of this process”.

Kaliningrad and Vladivostok were also mentioned as cities with a high number of arrivals in the country, the latter, under a free port system, already having the e-visa system for nationals from 18 countries (outside the EU).

With regard to the planning for the development of such an online system, Mr. Galkin points out that it is still too early to talk about it, but assumes that it will be possible to buy tourist services online for 8 to 10-day visits, such as excursions and cruises along the Volga River.

Moving towards a partial visa waiver?

In addition to simplifying the current tourist visa regime, Russia could offer international tourists, a partial visa waiver. This is at least what is proposed in a bill recently presented in the Duma by a group of deputies.

The text recommends that citizens of foreign countries, who have a friendly approach to the Russian Federation, economic plans and other close links with the country, should be able to stay in Russia without a visa for a period of 14 days.

Date: 2019-03-04

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/tourist-visa-policy-to-be-simplified-in-russia-news10967>