

## Migration law violators to be banned from entering Russia — Putin

Written by Administrator  
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**Prime-minister Vladimir Putin visits Federal Migration Service.** (RIA Novosti/Yana Lapikova)

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has suggested closing the door for up to 10 years to migrants who have repeatedly violated Russia's migration law.

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“I suggest barring those who repeatedly and persistently violate migration legislation, or have been extradited from the country under court decisions from Russia, for a term from five to 10 years, or even more,” Putin told a board meeting of the Federal Migration Service.

The statement was made shortly after the Prime Minister and presidential hopeful published his manifesto article on national policy, where he suggested introducing tougher rules for migrants — mainly citizens of the former Soviet republics, now the Commonwealth of Independent States.

More than a million migrant workers come to Russia each year, seeking a better life and work conditions — many of them stay in the country illegally.

Speaking on Thursday, Putin also urged imposing criminal liability on both individuals and companies for promoting illegal migration.

“Penalties must be toughened against those who provoke illegal migration...and those who organize illegal migration streams, who hire people without permission and, in fact, use them [in Russia] as slaves who have no rights,” he said.

Putin explained that the measures refer to organizers of night shelters and dormitories for illegal migrants.

The PM noted that so far, such violations have been subject mainly to nominal fines.

He proposed making amendments to Russia’s Criminal Code.

Head of Russia’s Federal Migration Service (FMS) Konstantin Romodanovsky, for his part, proposed introducing prison terms of up to five years for promoters of illegal migration.

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The head of government recalled that in earlier statements, he had referred to migration policy, and said he now wanted to clarify his ideas.

According to Putin, the quality of the migration policy will be based on the interests of Russian citizens.

“Russia is not going to shut itself out from any one. But what we absolutely need is to seriously raise the requirements for the quality of our migration policy, including the regulation of labor migration,” he told the FMS meeting.

He stressed that these measures will be taken, based on interests of economy and stability of Russian society.

Putin also observed that with the growth of the home labor market, the country will need to increase its labor resources.

This primarily applies to professionals.

He recalled that the procedure of getting a work permit has been simplified for highly-qualified foreign specialists.

However, only 14.5 thousand such permits have been obtained since July 2010.

“It’s a drop in the ocean compared to the overall immigration stream. But these are the people that we really need,” he said.

Putin noted that the practice of attracting skilled professionals is widely used in well-developed states.

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“Russia should not be an exception — a country that anyone can enter any time and in any way,” he pointed out.

He said that business, law enforcements agencies, the Interior Ministry and Federal Security Service should co-ordinate their work.

This would help to get an idea of how many people of this or that profession are needed in the various Russian regions.

Russia has a visa-free agreement with the majority of former Soviet republics.

Putin said that he does realize the difficulties that arise from this for the FMS officers. Illegal migrants get extradited from Russia, “go home at our expense and come back.”

However, Moscow is not going to introduce visas for most CIS states for political reasons, otherwise it would “lose them completely,” Putin said.

The PM also noted that Russia has the lowest number of migration-related problems with Belarus and Kazakhstan.

The three states are all members of a Customs Union that forms a common economic space, and are also planning to create a “Eurasian Union.”