

Ireland Waives Visa for Britain-Bound Russians

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The  **Moscow Times**

Ireland has unveiled its first ever visa waiver scheme, which will allow British visa-holders to visit Ireland without an additional visa, in an effort to boost tourism jobs and take advantage of the flood of visitors expected in Britain for the 2012 Olympics.

The pilot program will apply to citizens of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and several other countries and run from July 2011 until October 2012 (the London Olympics are scheduled for August 2012).

Russian tour operators might take this opportunity to launch combined tours of Britain and Ireland. About 120,000 Russian tourists visited Britain in 2010.

Tourists who take advantage of the program will benefit from strong transportation links between the two islands, including low cost flights from Ryanair and other carriers.

The Irish government has also relaxed visa requirements for cruise ship passengers, thus allowing tourists embarking at any Irish ports to easily visit Ireland without the hassle

of getting a visa, which usually costs about 60 euros.

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