

Duma Shortens New Year Break, Creates Flexible Two-Day Holiday

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Russians will have two fewer days in January to relax and admire the festive holiday lights beginning next year. **Dmitry Abramov**

The State Duma on Tuesday passed in a third and final reading a bill subtracting two vacation days from the current 10-day New Year break and creating a pair of flexible vacation days that will be assigned before each year, RIA-Novosti reported.

Beginning next year, the New Year break will last from January 1 to 8, and by no later than December 1 the Duma will add two extra days off to any state holiday throughout the year.

United Russia parliamentarian Andrei Isayev said the additional days could be tacked onto the May 1 or May 9 holidays depending on which of those days will be closer to a weekend.

In February, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin proposed limiting the New Year holiday to seven days, January 1 to 7, and adding three vacation days in May.

The move to shorten the 10-day January break, which was instituted in 2005, has been

discussed before. The holiday has been blamed by economists for knocking off as much as 0.5 percent of the country's GDP.

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